




# Thinking Critically

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND PROBLEM SOLVING**

Chaffee / Engleberg / Wynn / Wolff  
Wohlberg / Chang





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AND PROBLEM SOLVING

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by John Chaffee

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**WORKING IN GROUPS: COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES,  
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by Isa N. Engleberg and Dianna R. Wynn

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by Steven B. Wolff and Janet W. Wohlberg

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# THINKING CRITICALLY

Prof. Peter  
404-247-0472







# CHAPTER

# 1

## THINKING

### Working Toward Goals

How do goals function in my life?

What is the appropriate goal?

What are the steps and strategies?

### THINKING:

A purposeful, organized,  
cognitive process that we use  
to make sense of the world

### Deciding on a Career

What career should I choose?

What are my interests and abilities?

How do I discover the  
appropriate career?

### Making Decisions

What is the decision?

What are the choices?

What are the pros and cons?

What is the best choice?

What is my plan of action?

### Analyzing Issues

What is the issue?

What is the evidence?

What are the arguments?

What is the conclusion?

**Thinking can be developed and improved** by becoming aware of,  
carefully examining, and practicing the thinking process.

THINKING IS THE EXTRAORDINARY PROCESS we use every waking moment to make sense of our world and our lives. Successful thinking enables us to solve the problems we are continually confronted with, to make intelligent decisions, and to achieve the goals that give our lives purpose and fulfillment. It is an activity that is crucial for living in a meaningful way.

This book is designed to help you understand the complex, incredible process of thinking. You might think of this text as a map to guide you in exploring the way your mind operates. This book is also founded on the conviction that you can *improve* your thinking abilities by carefully examining your thinking process and working systematically through challenging activities. Thinking is an active process, and you learn to do it better by becoming aware of and actually using the thought process, not simply by reading about it. By participating in the thinking activities contained in the text and applying these ideas to your own experiences, you will find that your thinking—and language—abilities are becoming sharper and more powerful.

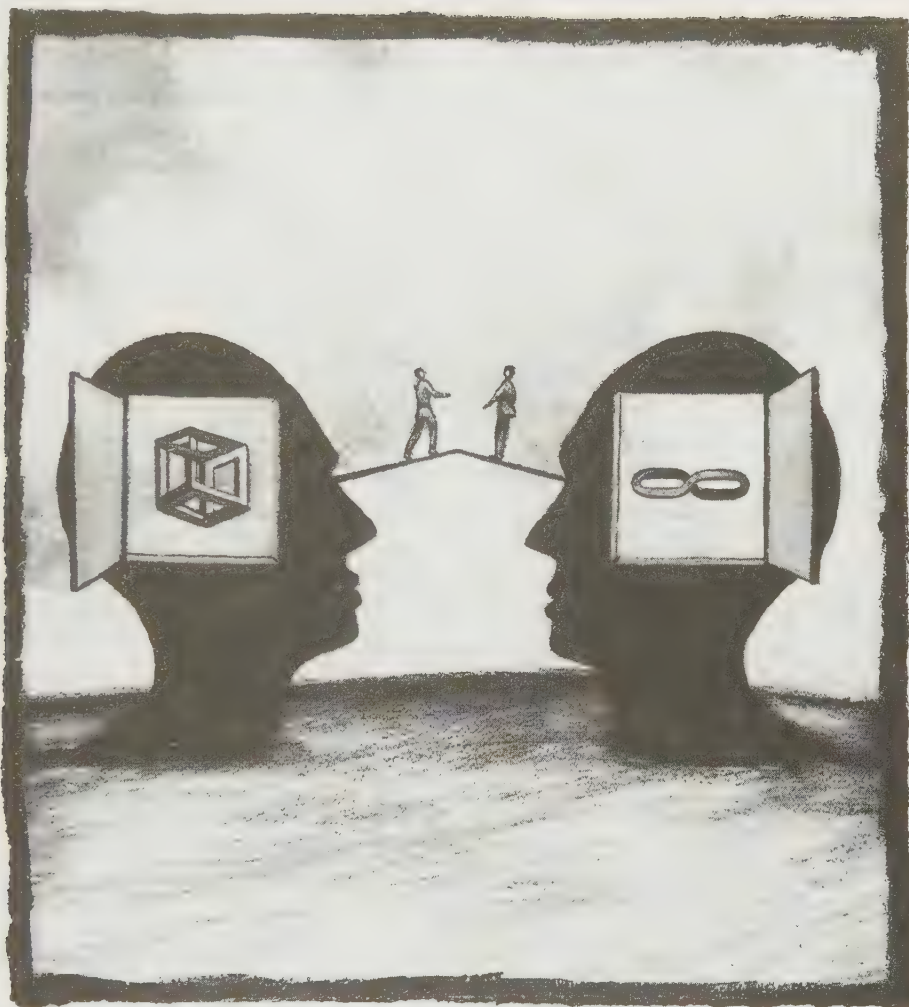
College provides you with a unique opportunity to develop your mind in the fullest sense. Entering college initiates you into a community of people dedicated to learning, and each discipline, or subject area, represents an organized effort to understand some significant dimension of human experience. As you are introduced to various disciplines, you learn new ways to understand the world, and you elevate your consciousness as a result. This book, in conjunction with the other courses in your college experience, will help you become an “educated thinker,” expanding your mind and developing your sensibilities.

Becoming an educated thinker will also help you achieve your career goals. In this rapidly evolving world, it is impossible to predict with precision your exact career (or *careers*) or the knowledge and skills that this career will require. But as an educated thinker you will possess the essential knowledge and abilities that will enable you to adapt to whatever your career situation demands. In addition, becoming an educated thinker will elevate your understanding of the world in which you live and help you develop insight into your “self” and that of others, qualities that are essential to high achievement in most careers.

In this chapter we will examine three areas of our lives in which we use the thinking process to understand our world and make informed decisions:

- Working toward goals
- Making decisions
- Analyzing issues





*Thinking is the extraordinary process we use to solve problems, make intelligent decisions, achieve the goals that give our lives purpose, and connect us to the people in our world.*

---

## LIVING AN "EXAMINED" LIFE

Our world has become a complex and challenging place in which to live. The accelerated pace at which many people live often makes them feel as though they are rushing from deadline to deadline, skating on the surface of life

instead of exploring its deeper meanings. What *is* the purpose of your life? Who are you, and who do you want to become? These are essential questions that form the core of life, and yet the velocity of our lives discourages us from even posing these questions, much less trying to answer them.

Your efforts to become thoughtful and reflective, to explore the nature of your self and the meaning of your life, is made even more difficult by the unthinking world in which we live. Consider all of the foolish opinions, thoughtless decisions, confused communication, destructive behavior, and self-absorbed, thoughtless people that you have to deal with each day. Reflect on the number of times you have scratched your head and wondered, "What was that person thinking?" And how many times have you asked yourself, "What was *I* thinking?" The disturbing truth is that many people don't think very well; they are not making use of their potential to think clearly and effectively.

Over 2,500 years ago the Greek philosopher Socrates cautioned, "The unexamined life is not worth living," underscoring the insight that when we don't make use of our distinctive human capacity to think deeply and act intelligently, our lives have diminished meaning. You have the capacity to create a richly fulfilling life, but you must develop and make full use of your thinking potential to do so. By becoming a true educated thinker, you will have the tools to unlock the mysteries of your self and meet the challenges of the world.

---

## WORKING TOWARD GOALS

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, / Or what's a heaven for?"

—Robert Browning

My future career goal is to become a professional photographer, working for National Geographic Magazine and traveling around the world. I originally had different dreams, but gradually drifted away from them and lost interest. Then I enrolled in a photography course and loved it. I couldn't wait until the weekend was over to attend class on Monday or to begin my next class project—reactions that were really quite unusual for me! Not everyone is certain at my age about what they would like to become, and I think it is important to discover a ca-



reer you will enjoy because you are going to spend the rest of your life doing it. I have many doubts, as I think everyone does. Am I good enough? The main thing I fear is rejection, people not liking my work, a possibility that is unavoidable in life. There is so much competition in this world that sometimes when you see someone better at what you do, you can feel inadequate. These problems and obstacles that interfere with my goals will have to be overcome. Rejection will have to be accepted and looked at as a learning experience, and competition will have to be used as an incentive for me to work at my highest level. But through it all, if you don't have any fears, then what do you have? Lacking competition and the possibility of rejection, there is no challenge to life.

As revealed in this student passage, goals play extremely important functions in your life by organizing your thinking and giving your life order and direction. Whether you are preparing food, preparing for an exam, or preparing for a career, goals suggest courses of action and influence your decisions. By performing these functions, goals contribute meaning to your life. They give you something to aim for and lead to a sense of accomplishment when you reach them, like the satisfaction you may have received when you graduated from high school or entered college. It is your thinking abilities that enable you first to identify what your goals are and then to plan how to reach these goals.

Most of your behavior has a purpose or purposes, a goal or goals, that you are trying to reach. You can begin to discover the goals of your actions by asking the question *why* of what you are doing or thinking. For example, answer the following question as specifically as you can:

*Why did you come to this class today?*

This question may have stimulated any number of responses:

- Because I want to pass this class.
- Because I was curious about the topics to be discussed.
- Because I woke up early and couldn't get back to sleep.

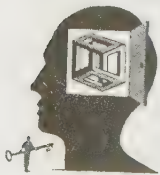
Whatever your response, it reveals at least one of your goals in attending class.

Using your response to the question "Why did you come to class today?" as a starting point, try to discover part of your goal patterns by asking a series of *why* questions. After each response, ask *why* again. (For example: Why did

you come to class today? *Because I want to pass this course.* Why do you want to pass this course? *Because . . .* ) Try to give thoughtful and specific answers.

As you may have found in completing the activity, this “child’s game” of repeatedly asking “why?” begins to reveal the network of goals that structure your experience and leads you to progressively more profound questions regarding your basic goals in life, such as “Why do I want to be successful?” or “Why do I want a happy and fulfilling life?” These are complex issues that require thorough and ongoing exploration. A first step in this direction is to examine the way your mind works to achieve your goals, which is the “goal” of this section. If you can understand the way your mind functions when you think effectively, then you can use this knowledge to improve your thinking abilities. This in turn will enable you to deal more effectively with new situations you encounter. To begin this process, think about an important goal you have achieved in your life, and then complete Thinking Activity 1.1. Thinking Activities are designed to stimulate your thinking process and provide the opportunity to express your ideas about important topics. By sharing these ideas with your teacher and other members of the class, you are not only expanding your own thinking, you are also expanding theirs. Each student in the class has a wealth of experiences and insights to offer to the class community.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 1.1 *ANALYZING A GOAL THAT YOU ACHIEVED*



1. Describe an important goal that you recently achieved.
2. Identify the steps you had to take to achieve this goal in the order in which they were taken, and estimate the amount of time each step took.
3. Describe how you felt when you achieved your goal. ◀

### *Achieving Short-term Goals*

By examining your response to Thinking Activity 1.1, you can see that thinking effectively plays a crucial role in helping you to achieve your goals by enabling you to perform two distinct, interrelated activities:

1. Identifying the appropriate goals
2. Devising effective plans and strategies to achieve your goals

You are involved in this goal-seeking process in every aspect of your daily life. Some of the goals you seek to achieve are more immediate (“short-term”)



than others: planning your activities for the day or organizing your activities for an upcoming test.

Although achieving these short-term goals seems like it ought to be a manageable process, the truth is your efforts probably meet with varying degrees of success. You may not always achieve your goals for the day, and you might *occasionally* find yourself inadequately prepared for a test. By improving your mastery of the goal-seeking process, you should be able to improve the quality of every area of your life. Let's explore how to do this.



*Successful thinkers are able to envision a detailed picture of their future goals and construct a specific practical plan to achieve their goals.*

*Identify* five short-term goals you would like to achieve in the next week. Now *rank* these goals in order of importance, ranging from the goals that are most essential for you to achieve to those that are less significant.

Once this process of identifying and ranking your goals is complete, you can then focus on devising effective plans and strategies to achieve your goals. In order to complete this stage of the goal-seeking process, select the goal that you ranked 1 or 2, and then *list all of the steps* in the order in which they need to be taken to achieve your goal successfully. After completing this list, *estimate how much time* each step will take and plan the step in your daily / weekly schedule. For example, if your goal is to prepare for a quiz in biology, your steps might include:

*Goal: Prepare for biology quiz in 2 days*

STEPS TO BE TAKEN	TIME INVOLVED	SCHEDULE
1. Photocopy the notes for the class I missed last week	20 minutes	after next class
2. Review reading assignments and class notes	2 hours	tonight
3. Make a summary review sheet	1 hour	tomorrow night
4. Study the review sheet	30 minutes	right before quiz

### METHOD FOR ACHIEVING SHORT-TERM GOALS

Step 1: Identify the goals.

*Identify* the short-term goals.

*Rank* the goals in order of importance.

*Select* the most important goal(s) to focus on.

Step 2: Devise effective plans to achieve your goals.

*List* all of the steps in the order in which they should be taken.

*Estimate* how much time each step will take.

*Plan* the steps in your daily/weekly schedule.

Although this method may seem a little mechanical the first few times you use it, it will soon become integrated into your thinking processes and will become a natural and automatic approach to achieving the goals in your daily life. Much of our failure to achieve our short-term goals is due to the fact that we skip one or more of the steps in this process. For example, some common thinking errors in seeking our goals include the following:



- We neglect to explicitly identify important goals.
- We concentrate on less important goals first, leaving insufficient time to work on more important goals.
- We don't identify all of the steps required to achieve our goals, or we approach them in the wrong order.
- We underestimate the time each step will take and/or fail to plan the steps in our schedule.

### *Achieving Long-term Goals*

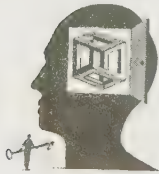
Identifying immediate or "short-term" goals tends to be a fairly simple procedure. Identifying the appropriate "long-term" goals is a much more complex and challenging process: career aims, plans for marriage, paying for children's college, goals for personal development. Think, for example, about the people you know who have full-time jobs. How many of these people get up in the morning excited and looking forward to going to work that day? The unfortunate fact is that many people have not been successful in identifying the most appropriate career goals for themselves, goals that reflect their true interests and talents.

How do you identify the most appropriate long-term goals for yourself? To begin with, you need to develop an in-depth understanding of yourself: your talents, your interests, the things that stimulate you and bring you satisfaction. You also need to discover what your possibilities are, either through research or actual experience. Of course, your goals do not necessarily remain the same throughout your life. It is unlikely that the goals you had as an eight-year-old are the ones you have now. As you grow, change, and mature, it is natural for your goals to change and evolve as well. The key point is that you should keep examining your goals to make sure that they reflect your own thinking and current interests.

Research studies have shown that high-achieving people are able to envision a detailed, three-dimensional picture of their future in which their goals and aspirations are clearly inscribed. In addition, they are able to construct a mental plan that includes the sequence of steps they will have to take, the amount of time each step will involve, and strategies for overcoming the obstacles they are likely to encounter. Such realistic and compelling concepts of the future enable these people to make sacrifices in the present to achieve their long-term goals. Of course, they may modify these goals as circumstances change and they acquire more information, but they retain a well-defined flexible plan that charts their life course.

On the other hand, research also reveals that people who are low achievers tend to live in the present and the past. Their concepts of the future are vague and ill defined: "I want to be happy," or "I want a high-paying job." This unclear concept of the future makes it difficult for them to identify the most appropriate goals for themselves, to devise effective strategies for achieving these goals, and to make the necessary sacrifices in the present that will ensure that the future becomes a reality. For example, imagine that you are faced with the choice of studying for an exam or participating in a social activity. What would you do? If you are focusing mainly on the present rather than the future, then the temptation to go out with your friends may be too strong. On the other hand, if you see this exam as connected to a future that is real and extremely important to you, then you are better equipped to sacrifice a momentary pleasant time for your future happiness.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 1.2 *ANALYZING AN IMPORTANT FUTURE GOAL*



Apply some of the insights we have been examining about working toward goals to a situation in your own life.

1. Describe as specifically as possible an important longer-term goal that you want to achieve in your life. Your goal can be academic, professional, or personal.
2. Explain the reasons that led you to select the goal that you did and why you believe that your goal makes sense.
3. Identify both the major and minor steps you will have to take to achieve your goal. List your steps in the order they need to be taken and indicate how much time you think each step will take. Make your responses as specific and precise as possible.
4. Identify some of the sacrifices that you may have to make in the present in order to achieve your future goal. ◀

### THINKING PASSAGE *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X*



In the following passage from his autobiography, Malcolm X, a civil rights activist and Black Muslim leader who was assassinated in 1965, describes the steps he took in pursuit of a significant goal while serving time in prison. During his stay at Norfolk Prison Colony, Malcolm X began writing letters to former friends as well as to various government officials. His frustration in trying to express his ideas led him to a course of self-education.



FROM *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X*  
by Malcolm X with Alex Haley

I became increasingly frustrated at not being able to express what I wanted to convey in letters that I wrote, especially those to Mr. Elijah Muhammad. In the street, I had been the most articulate hustler out there—I had commanded attention when I said something. But now, trying to write simple English, I not only wasn't articulate, I wasn't even functional. How would I sound writing in slang, the way I would *say* it, something such as, "Look, daddy, let me pull your coat about a cat, Elijah Muhammad—"

Many who today hear me somewhere in person, or on television, or those who read something I've said, will think I went to school far beyond the eighth grade. This impression is due entirely to my prison studies.

It had really begun back in the Charlestown Prison, when Bimbi first made me feel envy of his stock of knowledge. Bimbi had always taken charge of any conversation he was in, and I had tried to emulate him. But every book I picked up had few sentences which didn't contain anywhere from one to nearly all of the words that might as well have been in Chinese. When I just skipped those words, of course, I really ended up with little idea of what the book said. So I had come to the Norfolk Prison Colony still going through only book-reading motions. Pretty soon, I would have quit even these motions, unless I had received the motivation that I did.

I saw that the best thing I could do was get hold of a dictionary—to study, to learn some words. I was lucky enough to reason also that I should try to improve my penmanship. It was sad. I couldn't even write in a straight line. It was both ideas together that moved me to request a dictionary along with some tablets and pencils from the Norfolk Prison Colony school.

I spent two days just riffling uncertainly through the dictionary's pages. I'd never realized so many words existed! I didn't know *which* words I needed to learn. Finally, just to start some kind of action, I began copying. In my slow, painstaking, ragged handwriting, I copied into my tablet everything printed on that first page, down to the punctuation marks. I believe it took me a day. Then, aloud, I read back, to myself, everything I'd written on the tablet. Over and over, aloud, to myself, I read my own handwriting.

I woke up the next morning, thinking about those words—immensely proud to realize that not only had I written so much at one time, but I'd written words that I never knew were in the world. Moreover, with a little

effort, I also could remember what many of these words meant. I reviewed the words whose meanings I didn't remember. Funny thing, from the dictionary's first page right now, that "aardvark" springs to my mind. The dictionary had a picture of it, a long-tailed, long-eared, burrowing African mammal, which lives off termites caught by sticking out its tongue as an anteater does for ants.

I was so fascinated that I went on—I copied the dictionary's next page. And the same experience came when I studied that. With every succeeding page, I also learned of people and places and events from history. Actually the dictionary is like a miniature encyclopedia. Finally the dictionary's A section had filled a whole tablet—and I went on into the B's. That was the way I started copying what eventually became the entire dictionary. It went a lot faster after so much practice helped me to pick up handwriting speed. Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words.

I suppose it was inevitable that as my word-base broadened, I could for the first time pick up a book and read and now begin to understand what the book was saying. Anyone who has read a great deal can imagine the new world that opened. Let me tell you something: from then until I left that prison, in every free moment I had, if I was not reading in the library, I was reading on my bunk. You couldn't have gotten me out of books with a wedge. Between Mr. Muhammad's teachings, my correspondence, my visitors—usually Ella and Reginald—and my reading of books, months passed without my even thinking about being imprisoned. In fact, up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life. ■

### *Questions for Analysis*

In describing how he worked toward the goals of becoming literate and knowledgeable, Malcolm X touches on a variety of important issues related to developing thinking and language abilities. We can analyze some of the issues raised by answering the following questions:

1. Malcolm X states that, although he was an articulate "street hustler," this ability was of little help in expressing his ideas in writing. Explain the differences between expressing your ideas orally and in writing, including the advantages and disadvantages of each form of language expression.
2. Malcolm X envied one of the other inmates, Bimbi, because his stock of knowledge enabled him to take charge of any conversation he was in. Explain why knowledge—and our ability to use it—leads to power in our dealings with



others. Describe a situation from your own experience in which having expert knowledge about a subject enabled you to influence the thinking of other people.

3. Malcolm X states about pursuing his studies in prison that “up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life.” Explain what you think he means by this statement. Describe a time in your life that you felt “truly free.” ◀

---

## MAKING DECISIONS

In order to reach our goals, we have to learn to make the best decisions for ourselves or our community. Although we all make decisions, we don’t always make the most *informed* or *intelligent* decisions possible. In fact, most of us regularly have the experience of mentally kicking ourselves because we made a poor decision. For example, think about a decision you made that you would make differently if you had an opportunity to do it over again.

Many of our poor decisions involve relatively minor issues—for example, selecting an unappealing dish in a restaurant, agreeing to go out on a blind date, taking a course that does not meet our expectations. Although these decisions may result in unpleasant consequences, the discomfort is neither life-threatening nor long lasting (although a disappointing course may *seem* to last forever!). However, there are many more significant decisions in our lives in which poor choices can result in considerably more damaging and far-reaching consequences. For example, one reason that the current divorce rate in the United States stands at 50 percent is the poor decisions people make before or after the vows “till death do us part.” Similarly, the fact that many employed adults wake up in the morning unhappy about going to their jobs, anxiously waiting for the end of the day and the conclusion of the week (TGIF!) so they are free to do what they *really* want to do, suggests that somewhere along the line they made poor career decisions, or they felt trapped by circumstances they couldn’t control. Our jobs should be much more than a way to earn a paycheck—they should be vehicles for using our professional skills, opportunities for expressing our creative talents, stimulants to our personal growth and intellectual development, and experiences that provide us with feelings of fulfillment and self-esteem. In the final analysis, our careers are central elements of our lives and important dimensions of our life-portraits. Our career decision is one that we better try to get right!

An important part of becoming an educated thinker is learning to make effective decisions. Let’s explore the process of making effective decisions and

then apply your knowledge to the challenge of deciding on the most appropriate career for yourself.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 1.3 *ANALYZING A PREVIOUS DECISION*



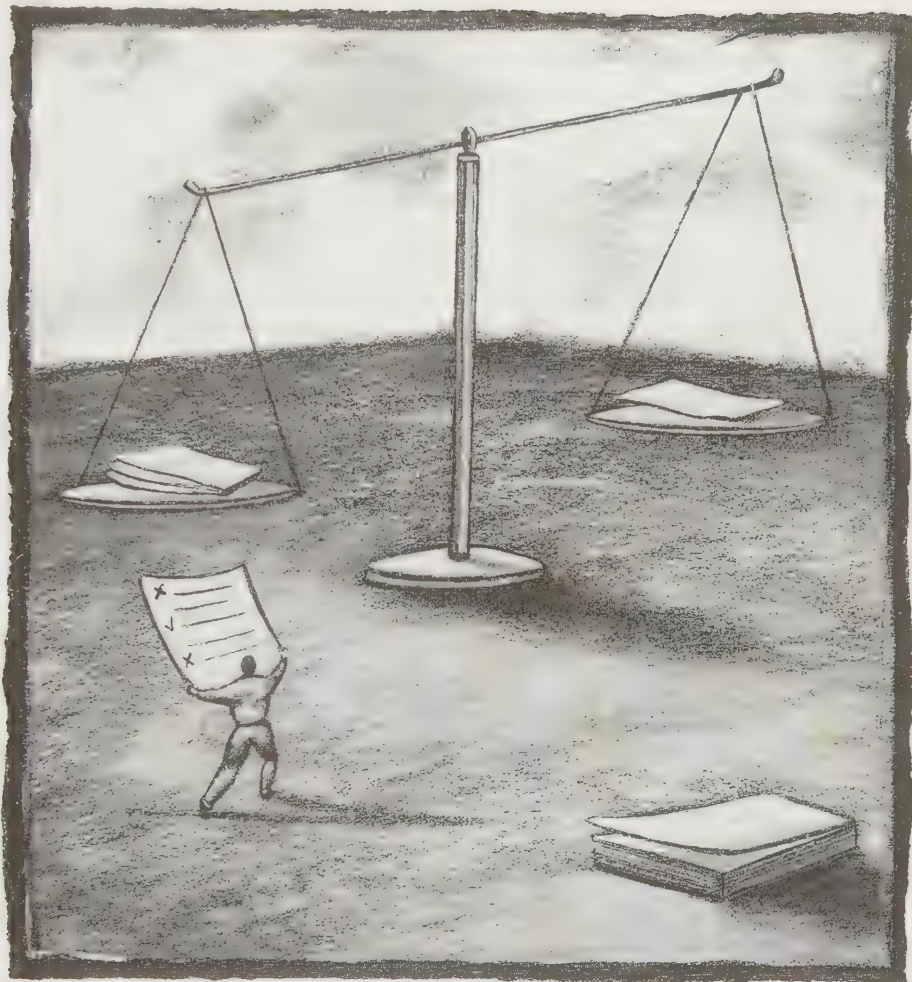
1. Think back on an important decision that you made that turned out well and describe the experience as specifically as possible.
2. Reconstruct the reasoning process that you used to make your decision. Did you:
  - Clearly define the decision to be made and the related issues?
  - Consider various choices and anticipate the consequences of these various choices?
  - Gather additional information to help in your analysis?
  - Evaluate the various pros and cons of different courses of action?
  - Use a chart or diagram to aid in your deliberations?
  - Create a specific plan of action to implement your ideas?
  - Periodically review your decision to make necessary adjustments? ◀

### *An Organized Approach to Making Decisions*

As you reflected on the successful decision you were writing about in Thinking Activity 1.3, you probably noticed your mind working in a more or less systematic way as you thought your way through the decision situation. Of course, we often make important decisions with less thoughtful analysis by acting impulsively or relying on our “intuition.” Sometimes these decisions work out well, but often they don’t, and we are forced to live with the consequences of these mistaken choices. People who approach decision situations thoughtfully and analytically tend to be more successful decision-makers than people who don’t. Naturally, there are no guarantees that a careful analysis will lead to a successful result—there are often too many unknown elements and factors beyond our control. But we can certainly improve our success rate as well as our speed by becoming more knowledgeable about the decision-making process. Expert decision-makers can typically make quick, accurate decisions based on intuitions that are informed, not merely impulsive. However, as with most complex abilities in life, we need to learn to “walk” before we can “run,” so let’s explore a versatile and effective approach for making decisions.

The decision-making approach we will be using consists of five steps. As you gradually master these steps, they will become integrated into your way of thinking, and you will be able to apply them in a natural and flexible way.





*People who approach decision situations thoughtfully and analytically tend to be more successful decision-makers than people who don't.*

**Step 1: Define the Decision Clearly.** This seems like an obvious step, but a lot of decision-making goes wrong at the starting point. For example, imagine that you decide that you want to have a “more active social life.” The problem with this characterization of your decision is it defines the situation too generally and therefore doesn't give any clear direction for your analysis. Do you want to develop an intimate, romantic relationship? Do you want to cultivate more close friendships? Do you want to engage in more social activities? Do

you want to meet new people? In short, there are many ways to define more clearly the decision to have a “more active social life.” The more specific your definition of the decision to be made, the clearer will be your analysis and the greater the likelihood of success.

*Strategy: Write a one-page analysis that articulates your decision-making situation as clearly and specifically as possible.*

**Step 2: Consider All the Possible Choices.** Successful decision-makers explore all of the possible choices in their situation, not simply the obvious ones. In fact, the less obvious choices often turn out to be the most effective ones. For example, a student in a recent class of mine couldn’t decide whether he should major in accounting or business management. In discussing his situation with other members of the class, he revealed that his real interest was in the area of graphic design and illustration. Although he was very talented, he considered this area to be only a hobby, not a possible career choice. Class members pointed out to him that this might turn out to be his best career choice, but he needed first to see it as a possibility.

*Strategy: List as many possible choices for your situation as you can, both obvious and not obvious. Ask other people for additional suggestions, and don’t censor or prejudge any ideas.*

**Step 3: Gather All Relevant Information and Evaluate the Pros and Cons of Each Possible Choice.** In many cases you may lack sufficient information to make an informed choice regarding a challenging, complex decision. Unfortunately, this doesn’t prevent people from plunging ahead anyway, making a decision that is often more a gamble than an informed choice. Instead of this questionable approach, it makes a lot more sense to seek out the information you need in order to determine which of the choices you identified has the best chance for success. For example, in the case of the student mentioned in Step 2, there is important information he would need to secure in order to determine whether he should consider a career in graphic design and illustration, including asking: What are the specific careers within this general field? What sort of academic preparation and experience is required for the various careers? What are the prospects for employment in these areas, and how well do they pay?

*Strategy: For each possible choice that you identified, create questions regarding information you need to find out, and then locate that information.*

In addition to locating all relevant information, each of the possible choices you identified has certain advantages and disadvantages, and it is essential



that you analyze these pros and cons in an organized fashion. For example, in the case of the student described earlier, the choice of pursuing a career in accounting may have advantages like ready employment opportunities, the flexibility of working in many different situations and geographical locations, moderate-to-high income expectations, and job security. On the other hand, disadvantages might include the fact that accounting may not reflect a deep and abiding interest of the student, he might lose interest over time, or the career might not result in the personal challenge and fulfillment that he seeks.

*Strategy: Using a format similar to that outlined in the following worksheet, analyze the pros and cons of each of your possible choices.*

*Define the decision:*

---

<i>Possible choices</i>	<i>Information needed</i>	<i>Pros</i>	<i>Cons</i>
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
(Etc.)			

**Step 4: Select the Choice That Seems to Best Meet the Needs of the Situation.** The first four steps of this approach are designed to help you *analyze* your decision situation: to clearly define the decision, generate possible choices, gather relevant information, and evaluate the pros and cons of the choices you identified. In the final step, you must attempt to *synthesize* all that you have learned, weaving together all of the various threads into a conclusion that you believe to be your “best” choice. How do you do this? There is no one simple way to identify your “best” choice, but there are some useful strategies for guiding your deliberations.

*Strategy: Identify and prioritize the goal(s) of your decision situation and determine which of your choices best meets these goals.* This process will probably involve reviewing and perhaps refining your definition of the decision situation. For example, in the case of the student that we have been considering, some goals might include choosing a career that will

- (a) provide financial security
- (b) provide personal fulfillment

- (c) make use of special talents
- (d) offer plentiful opportunities and job security

Once identified, the goals can be ranked in order of their priority, which will then suggest what the “best” choice will be. For example, if the student ranks goals (a) and (d) at the top of the list, then a choice of accounting or business administration might make sense. On the other hand, if the student ranks goals (b) and (c) at the top, then pursuing a career in graphic design and illustration might be the best selection.

*Strategy: Anticipate the consequences of each choice by “preliving” the choices.* Another helpful strategy for deciding on the best choice is to project yourself into the future, imagining as realistically as you can the consequences of each possible choice. As with previous strategies, this process is aided by writing your thoughts down and discussing them with others.

**Step 5: Implement a Plan of Action and Then Monitor the Results, Making Necessary Adjustments.** Once you have selected what you consider your best choice, you need to develop and implement a specific, concrete plan of action. As was noted in the section on short-term goals, the more specific and concrete your plan of action, the greater the likelihood of success. For example, if the student in the case we have been considering decides to pursue a career in graphic design and illustration, his plan should include reviewing the major that best meets his needs, discussing his situation with students and faculty in that department, planning the courses he will be taking, and perhaps speaking to people in the field.

*Strategy: Create a schedule that details the steps you will be taking to implement your decision and a time line for taking these steps.*

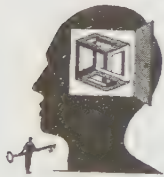
Naturally, your plan is merely a starting point for implementing your decision. As you actually begin taking the steps in your plan, you will likely discover that changes and adjustments need to be made. In some cases, you may find that, based on new information, the choice you selected appears to be the wrong one. For example, as the student we have been discussing takes courses in graphic design and illustration, he may find that his interest in the field is not as serious as he thought and that although he likes this area as a hobby, he does not want it to be his life work. In this case, he should return to considering his other choices and perhaps adding additional choices that he did not consider before.

*Strategy: After implementing your choice, evaluate its success by identifying what’s working and what isn’t, and make the necessary adjustments to improve the situation.*

### METHOD FOR MAKING DECISIONS

- Step 1: Define the decision clearly.
- Step 2: Consider all the possible choices.
- Step 3: Gather all relevant information and evaluate the pros and cons of each possible choice.
- Step 4: Select the choice that seems to best meet the needs of the situation.
- Step 5: Implement a plan of action and then monitor the results, making necessary adjustments.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 1.4 ANALYZING A FUTURE DECISION



1. Describe an important decision in your academic or personal life that you will have to make in the near future.
2. Using the five-step decision-making approach we just described, analyze your decision and conclude with your "best" choice.
3. Share your analysis with other members of the class and listen carefully to the feedback they give you. ◀

### DECIDING ON A CAREER

"Work is a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash . . . in short, for a life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying."

—Studs Turkel, *Working*

"What are you going to be when you grow up?" You have undoubtedly been asked this pivotal question many times throughout your life by well-intentioned adults. As children, this question is fun to contemplate, because life is an adventure and the future is unlimited. However, now that you are "grown up,"



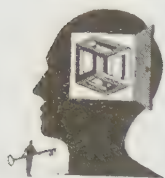
this question may elicit more anxiety than enjoyment. “What am I going to be?” “Who am I going to be?” Enrolling in college is certainly an intelligent beginning. The majority of professional careers require a college education. And the investment is certainly worthwhile in monetary terms: the average college graduate can expect lifetime earnings of \$980,000 more than peers who don’t go beyond high school—and \$740,000 more than those who start college but don’t graduate (*Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, 1998). But having entered college, many students’ reaction is “Now what?”

Perhaps you entered college right out of high school, or perhaps you are returning to college after raising a family, working in a variety of jobs, or serving in the armed forces. The question is the same: “What is the right decision to make about your career future?” Some people have no idea how to answer this question; others have a general idea about a possible career (or careers) but aren’t sure exactly which career they want or precisely how to achieve their career goals. Even if you feel sure about your choice, it makes sense to engage in some serious career exploration to ensure that you fully understand your interests and abilities as well as the full range of career choices that match up with your talents.

Most college students will change their majors a number of times before graduating. (This author changed his major two weeks after entering college!) Although many students are concerned that these changes reveal instability and confusion, in most cases they are a healthy sign. The changes suggest that they are actively engaged in the process of career exploration: considering possible choices, trying them out, and revising their thinking to try another possibility. Often we learn as much from discovering what we *don’t* want as from what we do want. The student who plans to become a veterinarian may end up concluding, “I never want to see a sick animal the rest of my life,” as one of my students confided after completing a three-month internship at a veterinary hospital.

The best place to begin an intelligent analysis of your career future is by completing a review of what you already know about your career orientation. Your personal history contains clues regarding which career directions are most appropriate for you. By examining the careers you have considered in your life, and by analyzing the reasons that have motivated your career choices, you can begin creating a picture of yourself that will help you define a fulfilling future. With these considerations in mind, complete the following activity as a way to begin creating your own individual “career portrait.” Start by describing two careers that you have considered for yourself in the past few years along with the reason(s) for your choices, and then complete the following Thinking Activity.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 1.5 *THINKING ABOUT YOUR CAREER PLANS*



Describe in a two-page paper your *current* thoughts and feelings about your career plans. Be very honest, and include the following:

1. A specific description of the career(s) you think you might enjoy
2. A description of the history of this choice(s) and the reasons why you think you would enjoy it (them)
3. The doubts, fears, and uncertainties you have concerning your choice(s)
4. The problems you will have to solve and the challenges you will have to overcome in order to achieve your career goal ◀

Too often, people choose careers for the wrong reasons, including the following:

- They consider only those job opportunities with which they are familiar and fail to discover countless other career possibilities.
- They focus on certain elements—such as salary or job security—while ignoring others—like job satisfaction or opportunities for advancement.
- They choose careers because of pressure from family or peers, rather than selecting careers that they really want.
- They drift into jobs by accident or circumstance and never reevaluate their options.
- They fail to understand fully their abilities and long-term interests, and what careers will match these.
- They don't pursue their "dream jobs" because they are afraid that they will not succeed.
- They are reluctant to give up their current unsatisfactory job for more promising possibilities because of the risk and sacrifice involved.

Whatever the reasons, the sad fact is that too many people wind up with dead-end, unsatisfying jobs that seem more like lifetime prison sentences than their "field of dreams." However, such depressing outcomes are not inevitable. This text is designed to help you develop the thinking abilities, knowledge, and insight you will need to achieve the appropriate career.

### *Creating Your Dream Job*

One of the powerful thinking abilities you possess is the capacity to think imaginatively. In order to discover the career that is right for you, it makes sense to use your imagination to create an image of the job that you believe would make you feel most fulfilled. Too often people settle for less than they have to, be-

cause they don't believe they have any realistic chance to achieve their dreams. Using this self-defeating way of thinking virtually guarantees failure in a career quest. Another thinking error occurs when people decide to pursue a career simply because it pays well, even though they have little interest in the work itself. This approach overlooks the fact that in order to be successful over a long period of time, you must be continually motivated—otherwise you may “run out of gas” when you most need it. Interestingly enough, when people pursue careers that reflect their true interests, their success often results in financial reward because of their talents and accomplishments, even though money wasn't their main goal!

So the place to begin your career quest is with your dreams, not with your fears. In order to get started, it's best to imagine an ideal job in as much detail as possible. Of course, any particular job is only one possibility within the field of your career choice. It is likely that you will have a number of different jobs as you pursue your career. However, your imagination works more effectively when conjuring up *specific* images, rather than images in general. Begin this exploratory process by providing a brief but detailed description of your ideal job, including the following dimensions:

1. *Physical setting or environment* in which you would like to spend your working hours
2. *Types of activities or responsibilities* you would like to spend your time performing
3. *Kinds of people* you would like to be working with
4. *Personal goals and accomplishments* you would like to achieve as part of your work

Of course, these initial responses are merely the first step toward giving your career exploration a genuine and appropriate direction. There is a great deal of thinking, research, and action required in order to transform your dreams into reality. The ancient Chinese proverb advises that the journey of a thousand miles begins with just one step. We might add that in order to reach your desired destination, you must make sure that first step is in the right direction!

### THINKING ACTIVITY 1.6 *DESCRIBING YOUR DREAM JOB*



Using your preceding responses as a guide, write a two-page description of your ideal job. Spend time letting your imagination conjure up a specific picture of your job, and don't let negative impulses (“I could never get a job like that!”) interfere with your creative vision. Be sure to address each of the four dimensions of your ideal job: (1) physical setting and environment, (2)



activities and responsibilities, (3) people, and (4) personal goals and accomplishments. ◀

### *Discovering “Who” You Are*

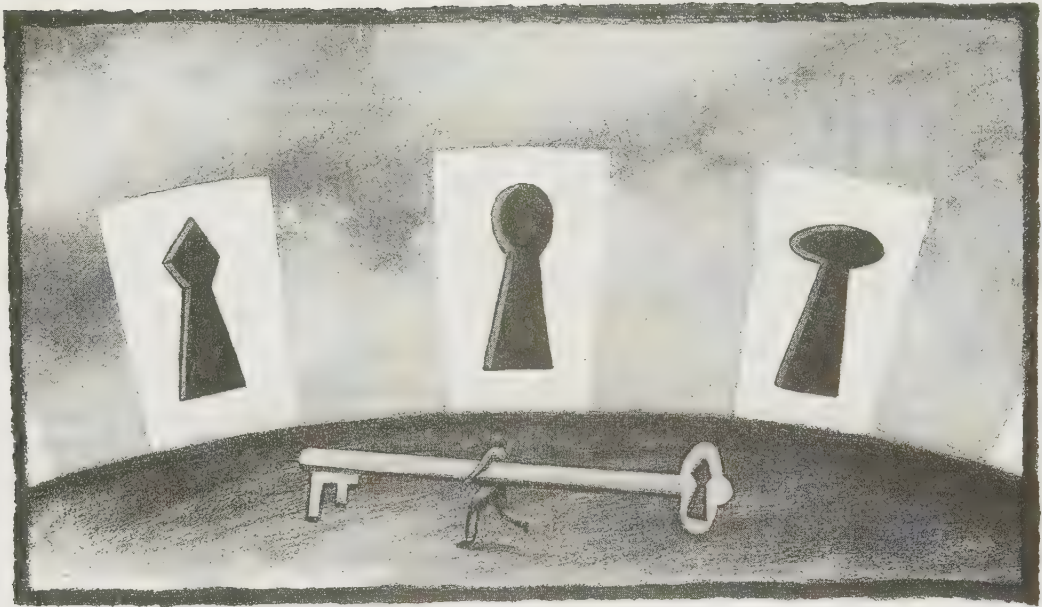
Each of us possesses an original combination of interests, abilities, and values that characterizes our personality. Discovering the appropriate career for yourself involves becoming familiar with your unique qualities: the activities that interest you, the special abilities and potentials you have, and the values that define the things you consider to be most important. Once you have a reasonably clear sense of “who” you are and what you are capable of, you can then begin exploring those careers that are a good match for you. However, developing a clear sense of “who” you are is a challenging project and is one of the key goals of this text. Many people are still in the early stages of self-understanding, and this situation makes identifying the appropriate career particularly difficult.

### *What Are Your Interests?*

In order to find a career that will be stimulating and rewarding to you over the course of many years, you must choose a field that involves activities that you have a deep and abiding interest in performing. If you want to be a teacher, you should find helping people learn to be an inspiring and fulfilling activity. If you want to be an architect, you should find the process of creating designs, working with others, and solving construction problems to be personally challenging activities. When people achieve a close match between their natural interests and the activities that constitute a career, they are assured of working in a profession that will bring them joy and satisfaction.

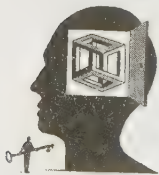
Achieving a positive match between your natural interests and potential careers means first identifying what your natural interests actually are. Each of us has many interests, and many of these do not appear to be directly relevant to our career decisions. However, if we examine the situation more closely, we can see that the many interests that we pursue form *patterns* of interests that are very relevant to our career decisions.

Although there is not necessarily a direct connection between interests and eventual career, carefully examining your interests should nevertheless provide you with valuable clues in discovering a career that will bring lifelong satisfaction.



*Discovering the appropriate career for yourself involves becoming familiar with your unique qualities: the activities that interest you, the special abilities you possess, and the values you consider to be most important.*

### THINKING ACTIVITY 1.7 IDENTIFYING YOUR INTERESTS



1. Create a listing of the interests in your life, describing each one as specifically as possible. Begin with the present and work backward as far as you can remember, covering the areas of *employment*, *education*, and *general activities*. Make the listing as comprehensive as you can, including as many interests as you can think of. (Don't worry about duplication.) Ask people who know you how they would describe your interests.
2. Once you have created your list, classify the items into groups based on similarity. Don't worry if the same interest fits into more than one group.
3. For each group you have created, identify possible careers that might be related to the interests described in the group.
4. A student example follows:

#### *Interest Group #1*

- I enjoy helping people solve their problems.
- I am interested in subjects like hypnotism and mental therapy.

- I have always been interested in the behavior of people.
- I enjoy reading books on psychology.

*Possible Careers:* clinical psychologist, occupational therapist, social worker, gerontologist, behavioral scientist, community mental health worker, industrial psychologist

*Interest Group #2*

- I am interested in the sciences, especially chemistry and anatomy.
- I like going to hospitals and observing doctors and nurses at work.
- When I was in high school, I always enjoyed biology and anatomy labs.
- I am interested in hearing about people's illnesses and injuries.

*Possible Careers:* doctor, nurse, physical therapist, paramedic, biomedical worker, chemical technician, mortician, medical laboratory technician

*Interest Group #3*

- I enjoy going to museums and theaters.
- I enjoy painting and drawing in my free time.
- I enjoy listening to music: classical, jazz, and romantic.
- I enjoy reading magazines like *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Vanidades*.

*Possible Careers:* actor, publicist, advertising executive, interior designer, fashion designer ◀

## ***What Are Your Abilities?***

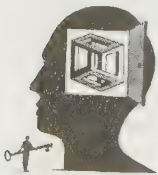
In general, the activities that you have a sustained interest in over a period of time are activities that you are good at. This is another key question for you to address as you pursue your career explorations: "What are the special abilities and talents that I possess?" Each of us has a unique combination of special talents, and it is to our advantage to select careers that utilize these natural abilities. Otherwise, we will find ourselves competing against people who *do* have natural abilities in that particular area. For example, think of those courses you have taken that seemed extremely difficult despite your strenuous efforts, while other students were successful with apparently much less effort (or, conversely, those courses that seemed easily manageable to you while other students were struggling). There is a great deal of competition for *desirable* careers, and if we are to be successful, we need to be able to use our natural strengths.



I once gave a simulated job interview to a woman who was majoring in business. She possessed wonderful social skills—she was personable, articulate, and engaging—but when reviewing her transcript, it was clear that she had done poorly in most of her business courses while performing very well in a variety of liberal arts courses. When I asked about her academic record, she responded, “I guess I just don’t have a head for numbers.” Unfortunately, if someone is to excel in business, it is important for her to have a “head for numbers,” or she will likely be seriously handicapped in her career growth. On the other hand, the student clearly had exceptional abilities in other areas that her career direction might not make full use of.

How do you go about identifying your natural abilities? One productive approach to begin identifying your abilities is to examine important accomplishments in your life, a strategy described in Thinking Activity 1.8. In addition, there are career counselors, books, and computer software programs that can help you zero in on your areas of interest and strength. However, we sometimes possess unknown abilities that we simply haven’t had the opportunity to discover and use. With this in mind, it makes sense for you to explore unfamiliar areas of experience to become aware of your full range of potentials.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 1.8 *IDENTIFYING YOUR ABILITIES*



1. Identify the ten most important accomplishments in your life. From this list of ten, select three accomplishments of which you are most proud. Typically, these will be experiences in which you faced a difficult challenge or a complex problem that you were able to overcome with commitment and talent.
2. Compose a specific and detailed description (one to two pages) of each of these three accomplishments, paying particular attention to the skills and strategies you used to meet the challenge or solve the problem.
3. After completing the descriptions, identify the abilities which you displayed in achieving your accomplishments. Then place them into groups, based on their similarity to one another. A student example is included next.

#### *Accomplishments:*

1. Graduating from high school
2. Getting my real estate license
3. Succeeding at college
4. Owning a dog
5. Winning a swim team championship
6. Moving into my own apartment
7. Finding a job

- |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 8. Getting my driver's license | 10. Learning to speak another |
| 9. Buying a car                | language                      |

*Accomplishment #1: Graduating from High School*

The first accomplishment I would like to describe was graduating from high school. I never thought I would do it. In the eleventh grade I became a truant. I only attended classes in my major, after which I would go home or hang out with friends. I was having a lot of problems with my parents and the guy I was dating, and I fell into a deep depression in the middle of the term. I decided to commit suicide by taking pills. I confided this to a friend, who went and told the principal. I was called out of class to the principal's office. He said he wanted to talk to me, and it seemed like we talked for hours. Suddenly my parents walked in with my guidance counselor, and they joined the discussion. We came to the conclusion that I would live with my aunt for two weeks, and I would also speak with the counselor once a day. If I didn't follow these rules they would place me in a group home. During those two weeks I did a lot of thinking. I didn't talk to anyone from my neighborhood. Through counseling I learned that no problems are worth taking your life. I joined a peer group in my school, which helped me a lot as well. I learned to express my feelings. It was very difficult to get back into my schedule in school, but my teachers' help made it easier. I committed myself to school and did very well, graduating the following year.

*Abilities/Skills from Accomplishment #1:*

- I learned how to analyze and solve difficult problems in my life.
- I learned how to understand and express my feelings.
- I learned how to work with other people in order to help solve each other's problems.
- I learned how to focus my attention and work with determination for a goal.
- I learned how to deal with feelings of depression and think positively about myself and my future. ◀

## *Finding the Right Match*

The purpose of these past few sections has been to help you use your thinking abilities to begin identifying your interests, abilities, and values. Discovering who you are is one part of identifying an appropriate career. The second part involves researching the careers that are available in order to determine which ones match up with your interests, abilities, and values. There are literally thousands of different careers, most of which you probably have only a vague notion about. How do you find out about them? There are a number of tools at your disposal. To begin with, your college probably has a career resource center that likely contains many reference books, periodical publications, videotapes, and software programs describing various occupations. Career counselors are also available either at your school or in your community. Speaking to people working in various careers is another valuable way to learn about what is really involved in a particular career. Work internships, summer jobs, and volunteer work are other avenues for learning about career possibilities and whether they might be right for you.

As you begin your career explorations, don't lose sight of the fact that your career decisions will likely evolve over time, reflecting your growth as a person and the changing job market. Many people alter their career paths often, so you should avoid focusing too narrowly. Instead, concentrate on preparing for broad career areas and developing your general knowledge and abilities. For example, by learning to think critically, solve problems, make intelligent decisions, and communicate effectively, you are developing the basic abilities needed in virtually any career. As an "educated thinker," you will be able to respond quickly and successfully to the unplanned changes and unexpected opportunities that you will encounter as you follow—and create—the unfolding path of your life.

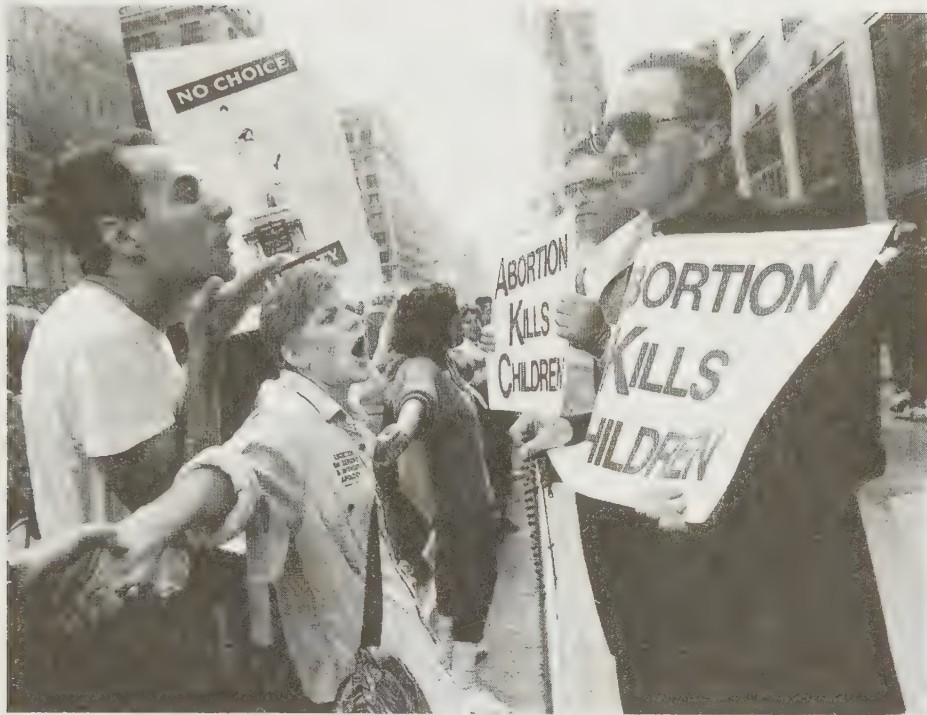
Discovering the right career is an adventure that involves careful analysis, comprehensive research, and patience. For the people who are willing and able to embark on this adventure, the result will be a career which will bring them a lifetime of challenges, accomplishments, and rewards. Instead of saying TGIF, you may actually say TGIM (Thank God it's Monday!).

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## ANALYZING ISSUES

We live in a complex world filled with challenging and often perplexing issues that we are expected to make sense of. For example, the media inform us every day of issues related to abortion, AIDS, animal experimentation, budget priori-





*As educated thinkers, we have an obligation to develop informed, intelligent opinions about the complex issues in our lives so that we can function as responsible citizens.*

ties, child custody, crime and punishment, drugs, genetic engineering, human rights, international conflicts, environmental pollution, poverty, moral values, pornography, individual rights, racism, reproductive technology, the right to die, sex education, and many others. Often these broad social issues intrude into our own personal lives, taking them from the level of abstract discussion into our immediate experience. As effective thinkers, we have an obligation to develop informed, intelligent opinions about these issues so that we can function as responsible citizens and also make appropriate decisions when confronted with these issues in our lives.

Almost everyone has opinions about these and other issues. Some opinions, however, are more informed and well supported than others. To make sense of complex issues, we need to bring to them a certain amount of background knowledge and an integrated set of thinking and language abilities. One of the central goals of this book is to help you develop the knowledge and sophisticated thinking and language abilities needed to analyze a range of complex issues.

### *What Is the Issue?*

Many social issues are explored, analyzed, and evaluated through our judicial system. Imagine that you have been called for jury duty and subsequently impaneled on a jury that is asked to render a verdict on the following situation. (Note: This fictional case is based on an actual case that was tried in May 1990 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.)

On January 23, the defendant, Mary Barnett, left Chicago to visit her fiancé in San Francisco. She left her six-month-old daughter, Alison, unattended in the apartment. Seven days later, Mary Barnett returned home to discover that her baby had died of dehydration. She called the police and initially told them that she had left the child with a baby sitter. She later stated that she knew she had left the baby behind, that she did not intend to come back, and that she knew Alison would die in a day or two. She has been charged with the crime of second-degree murder: intentional murder without premeditation. If convicted, she could face up to eighteen years in jail.

As a member of the jury, your role is to hear and weigh the evidence, evaluate the credibility of the witnesses, analyze the arguments presented by the prosecution and defense, determine whether the law applies specifically to this situation, and render a verdict on the guilt or innocence of the defendant. To perform these tasks with clarity and fairness, you will have to use a variety of sophisticated thinking and language abilities. To begin with, describe your initial assessment of whether the defendant is innocent or guilty and explain your reasons for thinking so.

As part of the jury selection process, you are asked by the prosecutor and defense attorney whether you will be able to set aside your initial reactions or preconceptions to render an impartial verdict. Identify any ideas or feelings related to this case that might make it difficult for you to view it objectively. Are you a parent? Have you ever had any experiences related to the issues in this case? Do you have any preconceived views concerning individual responsibility in situations like this? Then evaluate whether you will be able to go beyond your initial reactions to see the situation objectively, and explain how you intend to accomplish this.

### *What Is the Evidence?*

The evidence at judicial trials is presented through the testimony of witnesses called by the prosecution and the defense. As a juror, your job is to absorb the

information being presented, evaluate its accuracy, and assess the reliability of the individuals giving the testimony. The following are excerpts of testimony from some of the witnesses at the trial. Witnesses for the prosecution are presented first, followed by witnesses for the defense.

*Caroline Hospers:* On the evening of January 30, I was in the hallway when Mary Barnett entered the building. She looked distraught and didn't have her baby Alison with her. A little while later the police arrived and I discovered that she had left poor little Alison all alone to die. I'm not surprised this happened. I always thought that Ms. Barnett was a disgrace—I mean, she didn't have a husband. In fact, she didn't even have a steady man after that sailor left for California. She had lots of wild parties in her apartment, and that baby wasn't taken care of properly. Her garbage was always filled with empty whiskey and wine bottles. I'm sure that she went to California just to party and have a good time, and didn't give a damn about little Alison. She was thinking only of herself. It's obvious that she is entirely irresponsible and was not a fit mother.

*Policeman A:* We were called to the defendant's apartment at 11 P.M. on January 30 by the defendant, Mary Barnett. Upon entering the apartment, we found the defendant holding the deceased child in her arms. She was sobbing and was obviously extremely upset. She stated that she had left the deceased with a baby sitter one week before when she went to California, and had just returned to discover the deceased alone in the apartment. When I asked the defendant to explain in detail what had happened before she left, she stated: "I remember making airline reservations for my trip. Then I tried to find a baby sitter, but I couldn't. I knew that I was leaving Alison alone and that I wouldn't be back for a while, but I had to get to California at all costs. I visited my mother and then left. " An autopsy was later performed that determined that the deceased had died of dehydration several days earlier. There were no other marks or bruises on the deceased.

*Dr. Parker:* I am a professional psychiatrist who has been involved in many judicial hearings on whether a defendant is mentally competent to stand trial, and I am familiar with these legal tests. At the request of the district attorney's office, I interviewed the defendant four times during the last three months. Ms. Barnett is suffering from depression and anxiety, possibly induced by the guilt she feels for what she did. These symptoms can



be controlled with proper medication. Based on my interview, I believe that Ms. Barnett is competent to stand trial. She understands the charges against her, and the roles of her attorney, the prosecutor, the judge and jury, and can participate in her own defense. Further, I believe that she was mentally competent on January 23, when she left her child unattended. In my opinion she knew what she was doing and what the consequences of her actions would be. She was aware that she was leaving her child unattended and that the child would be in great danger. I think that she feels guilty for the decisions she made, and that this remorse accounts for her current emotional problems.

To be effective critical thinkers, we should not simply accept information as it is presented. We need to try to determine the accuracy of the information and evaluate the credibility of the people providing the information. Evaluate the credibility of the prosecution witnesses by identifying those factors that led you to believe their testimony and those factors that raised questions in your mind about the accuracy of the information presented. You can use these questions to guide your evaluation:

- What information is the witness providing?
- Is the information *relevant* to the charges?
- Is the witness *credible*? What *biases* might influence the witness's testimony?
- To what extent is the testimony accurate?

As a juror, performing these activities effectively involves using many of the higher-order thinking and language abilities explored in the chapters ahead, including Chapter 4, "Perceiving"; Chapter 5, "Believing and Knowing"; Chapter 6, "Language as a System"; and Chapter 9, "Reporting, Inferring, Judging." Based on the testimony you have heard up to this point, do you think the defendant is innocent or guilty of intentional murder without premeditation? Explain the reasons for your conclusion.

Now let's review testimony from the witnesses for the defense.

*Alice Jones:* I have known the defendant, Mary Barnett, for over eight years. She is a very sweet and decent woman, and a wonderful mother. Being a single parent isn't easy, and Mary has done as good a job as she could. But shortly after Alison's birth, Mary got depressed. Then her fiancé, Tim Stewart, was transferred to California. He's a navy engine mechanic. She started drinking to overcome her depression, but this just made things worse. She began to feel trapped in her apartment with little help raising

the baby and few contacts with her family or friends. As her depression deepened, she clung more closely to Tim, who as a result became more distant and put off their wedding, which caused her to feel increasingly anxious and desperate. She felt that she had to go to California to get things straightened out, and by the time she reached that point I think she had lost touch with reality. I honestly don't think she realized that she was leaving Alison unattended. She loved her so much.

*Dr. Bloom:* Although I have not been involved in judicial hearings of this type, Mary Barnett has been my patient, twice a week for the last four months, beginning two months after she returned from California and was arrested. In my professional opinion, she is mentally ill and not capable of standing trial. Further, she was clearly not aware of what she was doing when she left Alison unattended and should not be held responsible for her action. Ms. Barnett's problems began after the birth of Alison. She became caught in the grip of the medical condition known as postpartum depression, a syndrome that affects many women after the birth of their children, some more severely than others. Women feel a loss of purpose, a sense of hopelessness, and a deep depression. The extreme pressures of caring for an infant create additional anxiety. When Ms. Barnett's fiancé left for California, she felt completely overwhelmed by her circumstances. She turned to alcohol to raise her spirits, but this just exacerbated her condition. Depressed, desperate, anxious, and alcoholic, she lapsed into a serious neurotic state and became obsessed with the idea of reaching her fiancé in California. This single hope was the only thing she could focus on, and when she acted on it she was completely unaware that she was putting her daughter in danger. Since the trial has begun, she has suffered two anxiety attacks, the more severe resulting in a near-catatonic state necessitating her hospitalization for several days. This woman is emotionally disturbed. She needs professional help, not punishment.

*Mary Barnett:* I don't remember leaving Alison alone. I would never have done that if I had realized what I was doing. I don't remember saying any of the things that they said I said, about knowing I was leaving her. I have tried to put the pieces together through the entire investigation, and I just can't do it. I was anxious, and I was real frightened. I didn't feel like I was in control, and it felt like it was getting worse. The world was closing in on me, and I had nowhere to turn. I knew that I had to get to Tim, in California, and that he would be able to fix everything. He was always the one I went to, because I trusted him. I must have assumed that someone

was taking care of Alison, my sweet baby. When I was in California, I knew something wasn't right. I just didn't know what it was.

Based on this new testimony, do you think that the defendant is innocent or guilty of intentional murder without premeditation? Have your views changed? Explain the reasons for your current conclusion. Evaluate the credibility of the defense witnesses by identifying those factors that led you to believe their testimony and those factors that raised questions in your mind about the accuracy of the information being presented. Use the questions on page 32 as a guide.

### *What Are the Arguments?*

After the various witnesses present their testimony through examination and cross-examination questioning, the prosecution and defense then present their final arguments and summations. The purpose of this phase of the trial is to tie together—or raise doubts about—the evidence that has been presented in order to persuade the jury that the defendant is guilty or innocent. Included here are excerpts from these final arguments.

*Prosecution Arguments:* Child abuse and neglect are a national tragedy. Every day thousands of innocent children are neglected, abused, and even killed. The parents responsible for these crimes are rarely brought to justice because their victims are usually not able to speak in their own behalf. In some sense, all of these abusers are emotionally disturbed, because it takes emotionally disturbed people to torture, maim, and kill innocent children. But these people are also responsible for their actions and they should be punished accordingly. They don't have to hurt these children. No one is forcing them to hurt these children. They can choose not to hurt these children. If they have emotional problems, they can choose to seek professional help. Saying you hurt a child because you have "emotional problems" is the worst kind of excuse.

The defendant, Mary Barnett, claims that she left her child untended, to die, because she has "emotional problems" and that she is not responsible for what she did. This is absurd. Mary Barnett is a self-centered, irresponsible, manipulative, deceitful mother who abandoned her six-month-old daughter to die so that she could fly to San Francisco to party all week with her fiancé. She was conscious, she was thinking, she knew exactly what she was doing, and that's exactly what she told the



police when she returned from her little pleasure trip. Now she claims that she can't remember making these admissions to the police, nor can she remember leaving little Alison alone to die. How convenient!

You have heard testimony from her neighbor, Caroline Hospers, that she was considerably less than an ideal mother: a chronic drinker who liked to party rather than devoting herself to her child. You have also heard the testimony of Dr. Parker, who stated that Mary Barnett was aware of what she was doing on the fateful day in January and that any emotional disturbance is the result of her feelings of guilt over the terrible thing she did, and her fear of being punished for it.

Mary Barnett is guilty of murder, pure and simple, and it is imperative that you find her so. We need to let society know that it is no longer open season on our children.

After reviewing these arguments, describe those points you find most persuasive and those you find least persuasive, and then review the defense arguments that follow.

*Defense Arguments:* The district attorney is certainly correct—child abuse is a national tragedy. Mary Barnett, however, is not a child abuser. You heard the police testify that the hospital found no marks, bruises, or other indications of an abused child. You also heard her friend, Alice Jones, testify that Mary was a kind and loving mother who adored her child. But if Mary Barnett was not a child abuser, then how could she have left her child unattended? Because she had snapped psychologically. The combination of postpartum depression, alcoholism, the pressures of being a single parent, and the loss of her fiancé were too much for her to bear. She simply broke under the weight of all that despair and took off blindly for California, hoping to find a way out of her personal hell. How could she leave Alison unattended? Because she was completely unaware that she was doing so. She had lost touch with reality and had no idea what was happening around her.

You have heard the in-depth testimony of Dr. Bloom, who has explained to you the medical condition of postpartum depression and how this led to Mary's emotional breakdown. You are aware that Mary has had two severe anxiety attacks while this trial has taken place, one resulting in her hospitalization. And you have seen her desperate sobbing whenever her daughter Alison has been mentioned in testimony.

Alison Barnett is a victim. But she is not a victim of intentional malice from the mother who loves her. She is the victim of Mary's mental illness, of her emotional breakdown. And in this sense Mary is a victim

also. In this enlightened society we should not punish someone who has fallen victim to mental illness. To do so would make us no better than those societies who used to torture and burn mentally ill people whom they thought were possessed by the devil. Mary needs treatment, not blind vengeance.

After reviewing the arguments presented by the defense, identify those points you find most persuasive and those you find least persuasive.

The process of analyzing and evaluating complex arguments like those presented by the prosecution and defense involves using a number of sophisticated thinking and language abilities we will be exploring in the chapters ahead, including Chapter 2, "Thinking Critically"; Chapter 10, "Constructing Arguments"; and Chapter 11, "Reasoning Critically."

### *What Is the Verdict?*

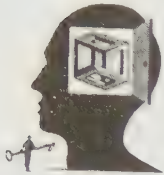
Following the final arguments and summations, the judge will sometimes give specific instructions to clarify the issues to be considered. In this case the judge reminds the jury that they must focus on the boundaries of the law and determine whether this case falls within these boundaries or outside them. The jury then retires to deliberate the case and render a verdict.

For a defendant to be found guilty of second-degree murder, the prosecution must prove that he or she intended to kill someone, made a conscious decision to do so at that moment (without premeditation), and was aware of the consequences of his or her actions. In your discussion with the other jurors, you must determine whether the evidence indicates, *beyond a reasonable doubt*, that the defendant's conduct in this case meets these conditions. What does the qualification "beyond a reasonable doubt" mean? A principle like this is always difficult to define in specific terms, but in general the principle means that it would not make good sense for thoughtful men and women to conclude otherwise. The whole area of forming, defining, and applying concepts is a key dimension of thinking effectively and is examined in Chapter 7, "Forming and Applying Concepts."

Based on your analysis of the evidence and arguments presented in this case, describe what you think the verdict ought to be and explain your reasons for thinking so.

Verdict: Guilty \_\_\_\_\_ Not Guilty \_\_\_\_\_

### THINKING ACTIVITY 1.9 ANALYZING YOUR VERDICT



Exploring this activity has given you the opportunity to *analyze* the key dimensions of this complex case. Now *synthesize* your thoughts regarding this case by composing a two-page paper in which you explain the reasons and evidence that influenced your verdict. Be sure to discuss the important testimony and your evaluation of the credibility of the various witnesses. ◀

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### SUMMARY

The first line of this chapter stated, “Thinking is the extraordinary process we use every waking moment to make sense of our world and our lives.” Throughout this chapter we have explored the different ways our thinking enables us to make sense of the world by working toward goals, making decisions, and analyzing issues. Of course, our thinking helps us make sense of the world in other ways as well. When we attend a concert, listen to a lecture, or try to understand someone’s behavior, it is our thinking that enables us to figure out what is happening. In fact, these attempts to make sense of what is happening are going on all the time in our lives, and they represent the heart of the thinking process.

If we review the different ways of thinking we have explored in this chapter, we can reach several conclusions about thinking:

- *Thinking is directed toward a **purpose**.* When we think, it is usually for a purpose—to reach a goal, make a decision, or analyze an issue.
- *Thinking is an **organized process**.* When we think effectively, there is usually an order or organization to our thinking. For each of the thinking activities we explored, we saw that there are certain steps or approaches to take that help us reach goals, make decisions, and analyze issues.

We can put together these conclusions about thinking that we have explored in this chapter to form a working definition of the term.

**Thinking** A purposeful, organized cognitive process that we use to make sense of our world.



Thinking develops with use over a lifetime, and we can improve our thinking in an organized and systematic way by following these steps:

- *Carefully examining our thinking process and the thinking process of others.* In this chapter we have explored various ways in which our thinking works. By focusing our attention on these (and other) thinking approaches and strategies, we can learn to think more effectively.
- *Practicing our thinking abilities.* To improve our thinking, we actually have to think for ourselves, to explore and make sense of thinking situations by using our thinking abilities. Although it is important to read about thinking and learn how other people think, there is no substitute for actually doing it ourselves.

The ability to think for ourselves by carefully examining the way that we make sense of the world is one of the most satisfying aspects of being a mature human being. We will refer to this ability to think carefully about our thinking as the ability to *think critically*.

<b>Thinking Critically</b>	Making sense of the world by carefully examining the thinking process to clarify and improve our understanding.
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We are able to think critically because of our natural human ability to *reflect*—to think back on what we are thinking, doing, or feeling. By carefully thinking back on our thinking, we are able to figure out the way our thinking operates and thus learn to do it more effectively. In the following chapters we will be systematically exploring many dimensions of the way our minds work, providing the opportunity to deepen our understanding of the thinking process and stimulating us to become more effective thinkers.

Of course, carefully examining the ideas produced by the thinking process assumes that there are ideas that are worth examining. We produce such ideas by *thinking creatively*, an activity we can define as follows.

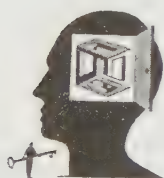
<b>Thinking Creatively</b>	The cognitive process we use to develop ideas that are unique, useful, and worthy of further elaboration.
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Examining the creative thinking process is a rich and complex enterprise. Although it is not the primary focus of this book, we will nevertheless be ad-

addressing important aspects of the creative thinking process as we explore in depth the critical thinking process. In fact, these two dimensions of the thinking process are so tightly interwoven that both must be addressed together in order to understand them individually. For example, when you imagined your “dream job,” you were using your creative thinking abilities to visualize an ideal career situation. With this idea as a starting point, you can use your critical thinking abilities to refine your idea and then research existing career opportunities. Once a clear career goal is established, you can use your creative thinking abilities to generate possible ideas for achieving this goal, while your critical thinking abilities will help you evaluate your various options and devise a practical, organized plan.

It is apparent that creative thinking and critical thinking work as partners to produce productive and effective thinking, enabling us to make informed decisions and lead successful lives. As this text unfolds, you will be given the opportunity to become familiar with both of these powerful forms of thought as you develop your abilities to think both critically and creatively.

### THINKING PASSAGE *JURORS’ REASONING PROCESS*



The following article, “Jurors Hear Evidence and Turn It into Stories,” by Daniel Goleman, author of the bestselling book *Emotional Intelligence*, describes recent research that gives us insight into the way jurors think and reason during the process of reaching a verdict. The reasoning process of jurors has come under increasing scrutiny with the controversial verdicts in high-profile cases like those of Rodney King, O. J. Simpson, William Kennedy Smith, and the “Boston Nanny.” As you read the article, reflect on the reasoning process you engaged in while thinking about the Mary Barnett case, and then answer the questions found at the end of the article.

#### JURORS HEAR EVIDENCE AND TURN IT INTO STORIES by Daniel Goleman

##### **Studies Show They Arrange Details to Reflect Their Beliefs**

Despite the furor over the verdict in the Rodney G. King beating case, scientists who study juries say the system is by and large sound. Many also believe that it is susceptible to manipulation and bias, and could be improved in various specific ways suggested by their research findings.

If there is any lesson to be learned from the research finding, it is that juries are susceptible to influence at virtually every point, from the moment members are selected to final deliberation.

Much of the newest research on the mind of the juror focuses on the stories that jurors tell themselves to understand the mounds of disconnected evidence, often presented in a confusing order. The research suggests that jurors' unspoken assumptions about human nature play a powerful role in their verdicts.

"People don't listen to all the evidence and then weigh it at the end," said Dr. Nancy Pennington, a psychologist at the University of Colorado. "They process it as they go along, composing a continuing story throughout the trial that makes sense of what they're hearing."

That task is made difficult by the way evidence is presented in most trials, in an order dictated for legal reasons rather than logical ones. Thus, in a murder trial, the first witness is often a coroner, who establishes that a death occurred.

"Jurors have little or nothing to tie such facts to, unless an attorney suggested an interpretation in the opening statement," in the form of a story line to follow, Dr. Pennington said.

In an article in the November 1991 issue of *Cardozo Law Review*, Dr. Pennington, with Dr. Reid Hastie, also a psychologist at the University of Colorado, reported a series of experiments that show just how important jurors' stories are in determining the verdict they come to. In the studies, people called for jury duty but not involved in a trial were recruited for a simulation in which they were to act as jurors for a murder trial realistically reenacted on film.

In the case, the defendant, Frank Johnson, had quarreled in a bar with the victim, Alan Caldwell, who threatened him with a razor. Later that evening they went outside, got into a fight, and Johnson knifed Caldwell, who died. Disputed points included whether or not Caldwell was a bully who had started the first quarrel when his girlfriend had asked Johnson for a ride to the racetrack, whether Johnson had stabbed Caldwell or merely held his knife out to protect himself, and whether Johnson had gone home to get a knife.

In detailed interviews of the jurors, Dr. Pennington found that in explaining how they had reached their verdicts, 45 percent of the references they made were to events that had not been included in the courtroom testimony. These included inferences about the men's motives and psychological states, and assumptions the jurors themselves brought to the story from their own experience.

The stories that jurors told themselves pieced together the evidence in ways that could lead to opposite verdicts. One common story among the jurors, which led to a verdict of first-degree murder, was that the threat



with the razor by Caldwell had so enraged Johnson that he went home to get his knife—a point that was in dispute—with the intention of picking a fight, during which he stabbed him to death.

By contrast, just as many jurors told themselves a story that led them to a verdict of not guilty: Caldwell started the fight with Johnson and threatened him with a razor, and Caldwell ran into the knife that Johnson was using to protect himself.

### **Role of Jurors' Backgrounds**

The study found that jurors' backgrounds could lead to crucial differences in the assumptions they brought to their explanatory stories. Middle-class jurors were more likely to find the defendant guilty than were working-class jurors. The difference mainly hinged on how they interpreted the fact that Johnson had a knife with him during the struggle.

Middle-class jurors constructed stories that saw Johnson's having a knife as strong evidence that he planned a murderous assault on Caldwell in their second confrontation. But working-class jurors said it was likely that a man like Johnson would be in the habit of carrying a knife with him for protection, and so they saw nothing incriminating about his having the knife.

"Winning the battle of stories in the opening statements may help determine what evidence is attended to, how it is interpreted, and what is recalled both during and after the trial," Dr. Richard Lempert, a psychologist at the University of Michigan Law School, wrote in commenting on Dr. Pennington's article.

Verdicts that do not correspond to one's own "story" of a case are shocking. In the King case, "We didn't hear the defense story of what was going on, but only saw the strongest piece of the prosecution's evidence, the videotape," said Dr. Stephen Penrod, a psychologist at the University of Minnesota Law School. "If we had heard the defense theory, we may not have been so astonished by the verdict."

In the contest among jurors to recruit fellow members to one or another version of what happened, strong voices play a disproportionate role. Most juries include some people who virtually never speak up, and a small number who dominate the discussion, typically jurors of higher social status, according to studies reviewed in *Judging the Jury* (Plenum Press, 1986) by two psychologists, Dr. Valerie Hans of the University of Delaware and Dr. Neil Vidmar of Duke University.

The research also reveals that "juries are more often merciful to criminal defendants" than judges in the same cases would be, said Dr. Hans.

### Blaming the Victim

In recent research, Dr. Hans interviewed 269 jurors in civil cases and found that many tended to focus on the ability of victims to have avoided being injured. "You see the same kind of blaming the victim in rape cases, too, especially among female jurors," Dr. Hans said. "Blaming the victim is reassuring to jurors because if victims are responsible for the harm that befell them, then you don't have to worry about becoming a victim yourself because you know what to do to avoid it."

That tendency may have been at work among the King jurors, Dr. Hans said, "when the jurors said King was in control and that if he stopped moving the police would have stopped beating him."

"Of course, the more they saw King as responsible for what happened, the less the officers were to blame in their minds," Dr. Hans said.

Perhaps the most intensive research has focused on the selection of a jury. Since lawyers can reject a certain number of prospective jurors during jury selection without having to give a specific reason, the contest to win the mind of the jury begins with the battle to determine who is and is not on the jury.

The scientific selection of juries began in the early 1970s when social scientists volunteered their services for the defense in a series of political trials, including proceedings arising from the 1971 Attica prison uprising in upstate New York. One method used was to poll the community where the trial was to be held to search for clues to attitudes that might work against the defendant, which the defense lawyers could then use to eliminate jurors.

For example, several studies have shown that people who favor the death penalty are generally pro-prosecution in criminal cases, and so more likely to convict a defendant. Defense lawyers can ask prospective jurors their views on the death penalty, and eliminate those who favor it.

On the basis of such a community survey for a trial in Miami, Dr. Elizabeth Loftus, a psychologist at the University of Washington, found that as a group, whites trust the honesty and fairness of the police far more than blacks. "If you knew nothing else, you'd use that demographic variable in picking a jury in the King case," she said. "But in Ventura County, there's a jury pool with almost no blacks. It was a gift to the defense, in retrospect."

Over the last two decades, such methods have been refined to the point that 300 or more consulting groups now advise lawyers on jury selection. ■

### *Questions for Analysis*

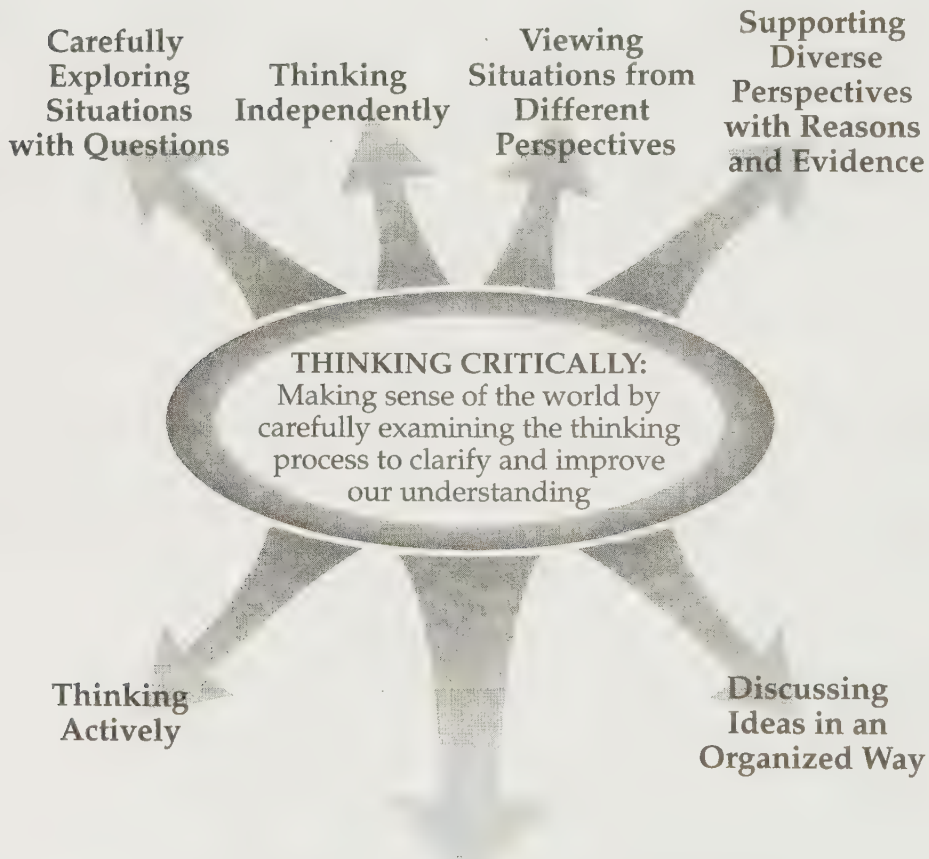
1. Reflect back on your own deliberations of the Mary Barnett case and describe the reasoning process you used to reach a verdict. Did you find that you were composing a continuing story to explain the testimony you were reading? If so, was this story changed or modified as you learned more information or discussed the case with your classmates?
2. Explain how factors from your own personal experience (age, gender, experience with children, etc.) may have influenced your verdict and the reasoning process that led up to it.
3. Explain how your beliefs about human nature and free will may have influenced your analysis of Mary Barnett's motives and behavior.
4. Explain whether you believe that the research strategies lawyers are using to select the "right" jury for their cases are undermining the fairness of the justice system.



## CHAPTER

# 2

## THINKING CRITICALLY



## BECOMING A CRITICAL THINKER

A COLLEGE EDUCATION is the road that can lead you to your life's work, a career that will enable you to use your unique talents to bring you professional fulfillment. However, there are many other benefits to a college education, among them the opportunity to become what we have called an "educated thinker." Becoming an educated thinker is essential for achieving the greatest possible success in your chosen career, and it enriches your life in many other ways as well.

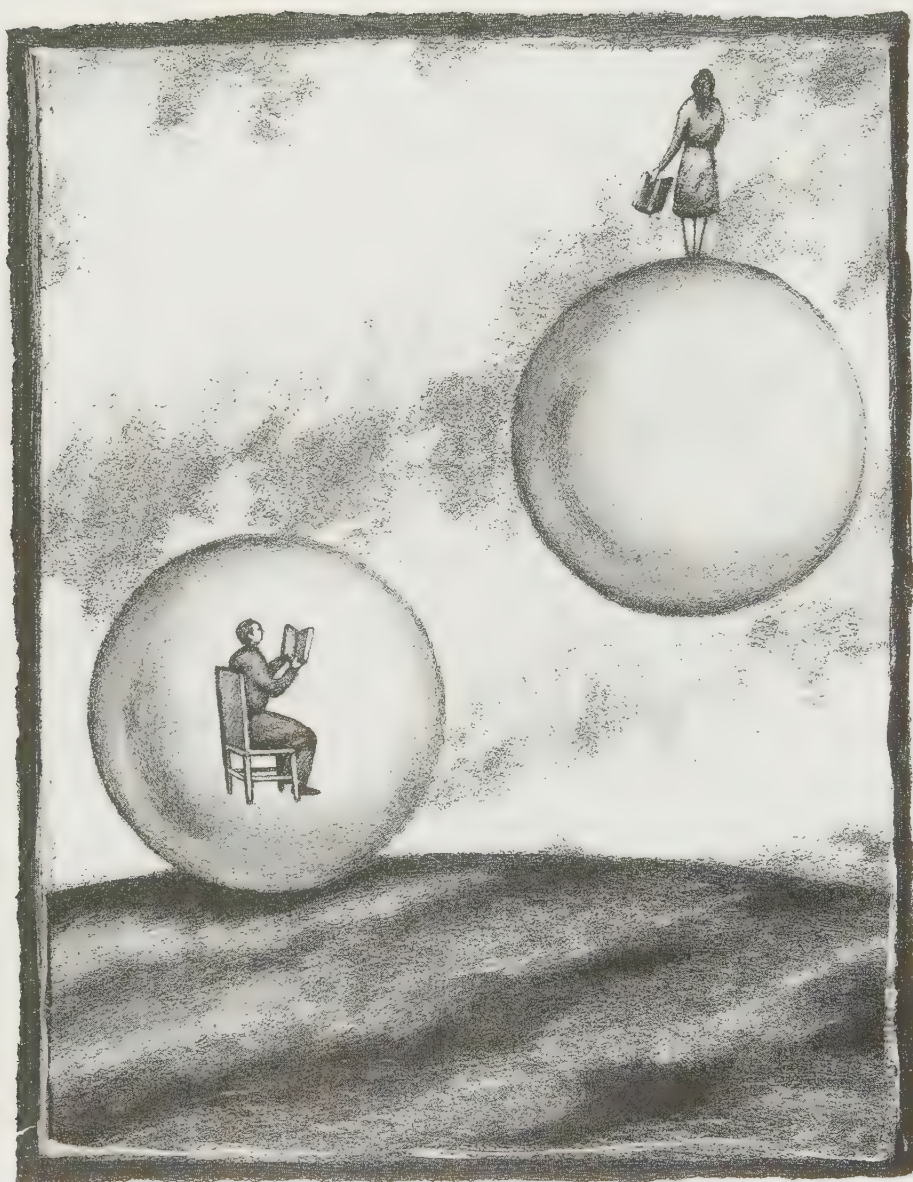
Traditionally, when people refer to an "educated thinker," they mean someone who has developed a knowledgeable understanding of our complex world, a thoughtful perspective on important ideas and timely issues, the capacity for penetrating insight and intelligent judgment, and sophisticated thinking and language abilities. These goals of advanced education have remained remarkably similar for several thousand years. In ancient Greece, most advanced students studied philosophy in order to achieve "wisdom." (The term *philosophy* in Greek means "lover of wisdom.") In today's world, many college students are hoping through their studies to become the modern-day equivalent: informed, *critical thinkers*.

The word *critical* comes from the Greek word for "critic" (*kritikos*), which means to question, to make sense of, to be able to analyze. It is by questioning, making sense of situations, and analyzing issues that we examine our thinking and the thinking of others. These critical activities aid us in reaching the best possible conclusions and decisions. The word *critical* is also related to the word *criticize*, which means to question and evaluate. Unfortunately, the ability to criticize is often only used destructively, to tear down someone else's thinking. Criticism, however, can also be *constructive*—analyzing for the purpose of developing a better understanding of what is going on. We will engage in constructive criticism as we develop our ability to think critically.

Thinking is the way you make sense of the world; thinking critically is thinking *about* your thinking so that you can clarify and improve it. If you can understand the way your mind works when you work toward your goals, make informed decisions, and analyze complex issues, then you can learn to think more effectively in these situations. In this chapter you will explore ways to examine your thinking so that you can develop it to the fullest extent possible. That is, you will discover how to *think critically*.

<b>Thinking Critically</b>	Making sense of the world by carefully examining the thinking process to clarify and improve our understanding.
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*Critical thinkers possess a knowledgeable understanding of the world, a thoughtful perspective on important ideas, the capacity for intelligent judgment, and sophisticated language abilities.*



Becoming a critical thinker transforms you in positive ways by enabling you to become an expert learner, view the world clearly, and make productive choices as you shape your life. Critical thinking is not simply one way of thinking; it is a total approach to understanding how you make sense of a world that includes many parts. This chapter explores the various activities that make up thinking critically, including the following:

- Thinking actively
- Carefully exploring situations with questions
- Thinking independently
- Viewing situations from different perspectives
- Supporting diverse perspectives with evidence and reasons
- Discussing ideas in an organized way

### *Fulfilling Your Potential*

It is essential to become a critical thinker in order to fulfill your human potential and live a meaningful life. Everybody “thinks”—*Homo sapiens* means “thinking man”—but most people don’t “think” very well. The purpose of this book is to help you reach your full thinking potential. This kind of transformational process is possible because the thinking process is such an integral part of who we are. When we expand our thinking, we expand who we are as human beings, the perspective from which we view the world, and the concepts and values we use to guide our choices. By exploring your thinking process and using it in carefully designed activities, you can develop it into a powerful, sophisticated tool that will enrich all dimensions of your life.

We each long for a life of significance, to feel that in some important way our own life has made a unique contribution to the world and to the lives of others. We each strive to create our self as a person of unusual quality, someone who is admired by others as extraordinary. We hope for lives characterized by accomplishments and lasting relationships that will distinguish us as memorable individuals both during and after our time on earth. Unfortunately, we often don’t achieve these lofty goals. In order to discover the meaning of our lives, we need to understand “who” we are. And we live in an age in which many people are not sure “who” they are or whether in fact their lives have *any* significant meaning.

When we are asked questions such as “Who are you?” or “What is the meaning of your life?” we often have no idea of how to respond. But an even more revealing symptom of our confusion and alienation is the fact that we

rarely even pose these questions—to ourselves or to others. We are too busy “living” to wonder *why* we are living or who is actually doing the living. But can we afford to be too busy to find meaning in our lives? We so often cruise along on autopilot—days slipping into weeks, weeks merging into years, years coalescing into a life—without confronting these important questions. If we are to become human in the fullest sense, achieving our distinctive potentials and living lives of significance, we must become thoughtful and reflective critical thinkers.

This book is designed to provide the knowledge, guidance, and practice needed to elevate your thinking abilities to an optimal level. As a natural result of improving your thinking abilities, you will enrich the quality of your life and who you are as a human being. In our present culture, we spend a great deal of time, money, and effort seeking to improve our health, condition our bodies, and better our personal appearance. Too often neglected is the most important ingredient: the core of who we are—our ability to think and reflect, to understand our past and create our futures. We must restructure the way that we *think* in order to reshape the way that we *are*. Each of us strives for a life of purpose. Such lives are within our grasp, but to achieve them, we must harness the power of our minds by becoming enlightened critical thinkers.

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## THINKING ACTIVELY

When you think critically, you are *actively* using your intelligence, knowledge, and abilities to deal effectively with life’s situations. When you think actively, you are

- *Getting involved* in potentially useful projects and activities instead of remaining disengaged
- *Taking initiative* in making decisions on your own instead of waiting passively to be told what to think or do
- *Following through* on your commitments instead of giving up when you encounter difficulties
- *Taking responsibility* for the consequences of your decisions rather than unjustifiably blaming others or events “beyond your control”

When you think actively, you are not just waiting for something to happen. You are engaged in the process of achieving goals, making decisions, and solving problems. When you react passively, you let events control you or permit others to do your thinking for you. To make an intelligent decision about

your future career, for example, you have to work actively to secure more information, try out various possibilities, speak with people who are experienced in your area of interest, and then critically reflect on all these factors. Thinking critically requires that you think actively—not react passively—to deal effectively with life's situations.

### *Influences on Your Thinking*

As our minds grow and develop, we are exposed to influences that encourage us to think actively. We also, however, have many experiences that encourage us to think passively. For example, some analysts believe that when people, especially children, spend much of their time watching television, they are being influenced to think passively, thus inhibiting their intellectual growth. Listed here are some of the influences we experience in our lives along with space for you to add your own influences. As you read through the list, place an *A* next to those items you believe in general influence you to think *actively*, and a *P* next to those you consider to be generally *passive* influences.

#### *Activities:*

Reading books  
Writing  
Watching television  
Dancing  
Drawing/painting  
Playing video games  
Playing sports  
Listening to music

#### *People:*

Family members  
Friends  
Employers  
Advertisers  
School/college teachers  
Police officers  
Religious leaders  
Politicians

### **THINKING ACTIVITY 2.1** *INFLUENCES ON OUR THINKING*



All of us are subject to powerful influences on our thinking, influences that we are often unaware of. For example, advertisers spend billions of dollars to manipulate our thinking in ways that are complex and subtle. For this exercise, choose one of the following tasks:

1. Watch some typical commercials, with several other class members if possible, and discuss with other watchers the techniques each advertiser is using to shape your thinking. Analyze with the other viewers how each of the

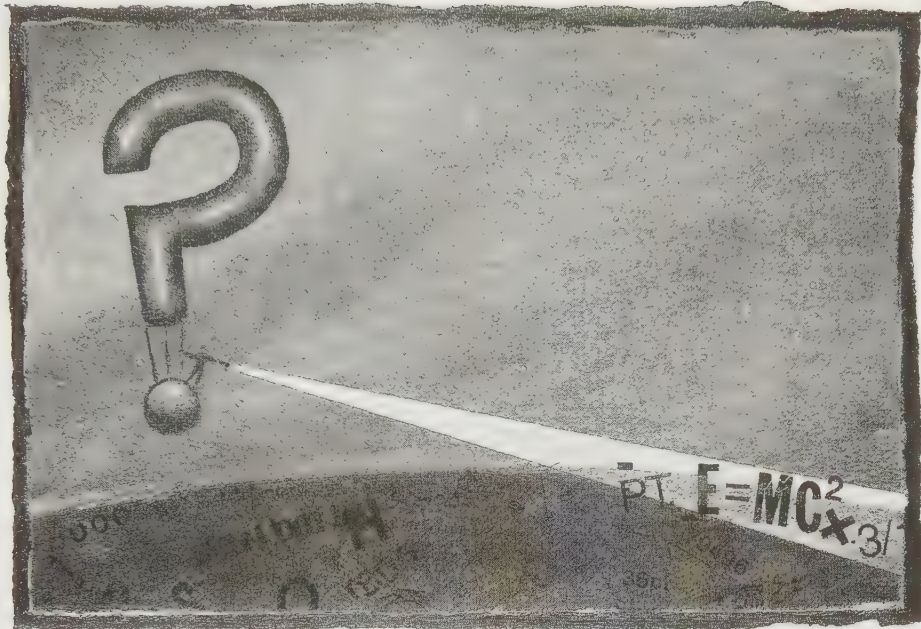


elements in a commercial—images, language, music—affects an audience. Pay particular attention to the symbolic associations of various images and words, and identify the powerful emotions that these associations elicit. Why are the commercials effective? What influential roles do commercials play in our culture as a whole? For instance, think about how the impact of Nike commercials extends far beyond merely selling athletic shoes and sports-wear to creating idealized images that people strive to emulate.

2. Select a Web site that uses advertisements and do an in-depth analysis of it. Explain how each of the site's elements—design, content, use of advertisements, links—works to influence our thinking. Pay particular attention to the advertisements: Are they static or flashing (in the same place, but changing every few minutes)? If you are observing a changing advertisement, monitor it for an hour or two and see how often it changes and who the advertisers are. What does this tell you about the site and the creators of the site? ◀

Of course, in many cases people and activities can act as both active and passive influences, depending on the specifics of situations and our individual responses. For example, consider employers. If we are performing a routine, repetitive job, as I did during the summer I spent in a peanut butter cracker factory hand-scooping 2,000 pounds of peanut butter a day, the very nature of the work tends to encourage passive, uncreative thinking (although it might also lead to creative daydreaming!). We are also influenced to think passively if our employer gives us detailed instructions for performing every task, instructions that permit no exception or deviation. On the other hand, when our employer gives us general areas of responsibility within which we are expected to make thoughtful and creative decisions, then we are being stimulated to think actively and independently.

These contrasting styles of supervision are mirrored in different approaches to raising children. Some parents encourage children to be active thinkers by teaching them to express themselves clearly, make independent decisions, look at different points of view, and choose what they think is right for themselves. Other parents influence their children to be passive thinkers by not letting them do things on their own. These parents give the children detailed instructions they are expected to follow without question and make the important decisions for them. They are reluctant to give their children significant responsibilities, creating, unintentionally, dependent thinkers who are not well adapted to making independent decisions and assuming responsibility for their lives.



*Active learners take initiative in exploring their world, think independently and creatively, and take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions.*

### ***Becoming an Active Learner***

Critical thinkers actively use their intelligence, knowledge, and abilities to deal with life's situations. Similarly, active thinking is one of the keys to effective learning. Each of us has our own knowledge framework that we use to make sense of the world, a framework that incorporates all that we have learned in our lives. When we learn something new, we have to find ways to integrate this new information or skill into our existing knowledge framework. For example, if one of your professors is presenting material on Sigmund Freud's concept of the unconscious or the role of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle in the theory of quantum mechanics, you need to find ways to relate these new ideas to things you already know in order to make this new information "your own." How do you do this? By actively using your mind to integrate new information into your existing knowledge framework, thereby expanding the framework to include this new information.

For example, when your professor provides a detailed analysis of Freud's concept of the unconscious, you use your mind to call up what you know about Freud's theory of personality and what you know of the concept of the uncon-

scious. You then try to connect this new information to what you already know, integrating it into your expanding knowledge framework. In a way, learning is analogous to the activity of eating: you ingest food (*information*) in one form, actively transform it through digestion (*mental processing*), and then integrate the result into the ongoing functioning of your body.

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## CAREFULLY EXPLORING SITUATIONS WITH QUESTIONS

As you have just seen, thinking critically involves actively using your thinking abilities to attack problems, meet challenges, and analyze issues. An important dimension of thinking actively is carefully exploring the situations in which you are involved with relevant questions. In fact, the ability to ask appropriate and penetrating questions is one of the most powerful thinking tools you possess, although many people do not make full use of it. Active learners explore the learning situations they are involved in with questions that enable them to understand the material or task at hand, and then integrate this new understanding into their knowledge framework. In contrast, passive learners rarely ask questions. Instead, they try to absorb information like sponges, memorizing what is expected and then regurgitating what they memorized on tests and quizzes.

Questions come in many different forms and are used for a variety of purposes. For instance, questions can be classified in terms of the ways that people organize and interpret information, and we can identify six such categories of questions:

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Fact           | 4. Synthesis   |
| 2. Interpretation | 5. Evaluation  |
| 3. Analysis       | 6. Application |

Active learners are able to ask appropriate questions from all of these categories in a very natural and flexible way. These various types of questions are closely interrelated, and an effective thinker is able to use them in a productive relation to one another. Also, these categories of questions are very general and at times overlap with one another. This means that a given question may fall into more than one of the six categories of questions. Following is a summary of the six categories of questions along with sample forms of questions from each category.



1. *Questions of Fact:* Questions of fact seek to determine the basic information of a situation: who, what, when, where, how. These questions seek information that is relatively straightforward and objective.

Who, what, when, where, how \_\_\_\_\_?

Describe \_\_\_\_\_.

2. *Questions of Interpretation:* Questions of interpretation seek to select and organize facts and ideas, discovering the relationships between them. Examples of such relationships include the following:

- *Chronological relationships:* relating things in time sequence
- *Process relationships:* relating aspects of growth, development, or change
- *Comparison/contrast relationships:* relating things in terms of their similar/different features
- *Causal relationships:* relating events in terms of the way some events are responsible for bringing about other events

Retell \_\_\_\_\_ in your own words.

What is the *main idea* of \_\_\_\_\_?

What is the *time sequence* relating the following events: \_\_\_\_\_?

What are the steps in the *process of growth* or *development* in \_\_\_\_\_?

How would you *compare and contrast* \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_?

What was the *cause* of \_\_\_\_\_? The *effect* of \_\_\_\_\_?

3. *Questions of Analysis:* Questions of analysis seek to separate an entire process or situation into its component parts and to understand the relation of these parts to the whole. These questions attempt to classify various elements, outline component structures, articulate various possibilities, and clarify the reasoning being presented.

What are the *parts* or *features* of \_\_\_\_\_?

Classify \_\_\_\_\_ according to \_\_\_\_\_.

Outline/diagram/web \_\_\_\_\_.

What *evidence* can you present to support \_\_\_\_\_?

What are the *possible alternatives* for \_\_\_\_\_?

Explain the *reasons why* you think \_\_\_\_\_.

4. *Questions of Synthesis*: Questions of synthesis have as their goal combining ideas to form a new whole or come to a conclusion, making inferences about future events, creating solutions, and designing plans of action.

What would you *predict/infer* from \_\_\_\_\_?

What ideas can you *add to* \_\_\_\_\_?

How would you *create/design* a new \_\_\_\_\_?

What might happen if you *combined* \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_?

What *solutions/decisions* would you suggest for \_\_\_\_\_?

5. *Questions of Evaluation*: The aim of evaluation questions is to help us make informed judgments and decisions by determining the relative value, truth, or reliability of things. The process of evaluation involves identifying the criteria or standards we are using and then determining to what extent the things in common meet those standards.

How would you *evaluate* \_\_\_\_\_, and what *standards* would you use?

Do you agree with \_\_\_\_\_? Why or why not?

How would you *decide* about \_\_\_\_\_?

What *criteria* would you use to *assess* \_\_\_\_\_?

6. *Questions of Application*: The aim of application questions is to help us take the knowledge or concepts we have gained in one situation and apply them to other situations.

How is \_\_\_\_\_ an example of \_\_\_\_\_?

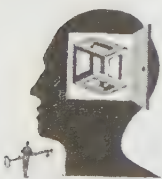
How would you *apply* this rule/principle to \_\_\_\_\_?

Mastering these forms of questions and using them appropriately will serve you as powerful tools in the learning process.

Becoming an expert questioner is an ongoing project, and you can practice it throughout the day. When you are talking to people about even everyday topics, get in the habit of asking questions from all of the different categories. Similarly, when you are attending class, taking notes, or reading assignments, make a practice of asking—and trying to answer—appropriate questions. You will find that by actively exploring the world in this way you are discovering a great deal and learning what you have discovered in a meaningful and lasting fashion.

As children, we were natural questioners, but this questioning attitude was often discouraged when we entered the school system. Often we were given the message, in subtle and not so subtle ways, that “schools have the questions; your job is to learn the answers.” The educator Neil Postman has said: “Children enter schools as question marks and they leave as periods.” In order for us to become critical thinkers and effective learners, we have to become question marks again.

## THINKING ACTIVITY 2.2 ANALYZING A COMPLEX ISSUE



Review the following decision-making situation (based on an incident that happened in Springfield, Missouri, in 1989), and then critically examine it by posing questions from each of the six categories we have considered in this section:

- |                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Fact           | 4. Synthesis   |
| 2. Interpretation | 5. Evaluation  |
| 3. Analysis       | 6. Application |

Imagine that you are a member of a student group at your college that has decided to stage the controversial play *The Normal Heart* by Larry Kramer. The play is based on the lives of real people and dramatizes their experiences in the early stages of the AIDS epidemic. It focuses on their efforts to publicize the horrific nature of this disease and to secure funding from a reluctant federal government to find a cure. The play is considered controversial because of its exclusive focus on the subject of AIDS, its explicit homosexual themes, and the large amount of profanity contained in the script. After lengthy discussion,



however, your student group has decided that the educational and moral benefits of the play render it a valuable contribution to the life of the college.

While the play is in rehearsal, a local politician seizes upon it as an issue and mounts a political and public relations campaign against it. She distributes selected excerpts of the play to newspapers, religious groups, and civic organizations. She also introduces a bill in the state legislature to withdraw state funding for the college if the play is performed. The play creates a firestorm of controversy, replete with local and national news reports, editorials, and impassioned speeches for and against it. Everyone associated with the play is subjected to verbal harassment, threats, crank phone calls, and hate mail. The firestorm explodes when the house of one of the key spokespersons for the play is burned to the ground. The director and actors go into hiding for their safety, rehearsing in secret and moving from hotel to hotel.

Your student group has just convened to decide what course of action to take. Analyze the situation using the six types of questions listed previously and then conclude with your decision and the reasons that support your decision. ◀

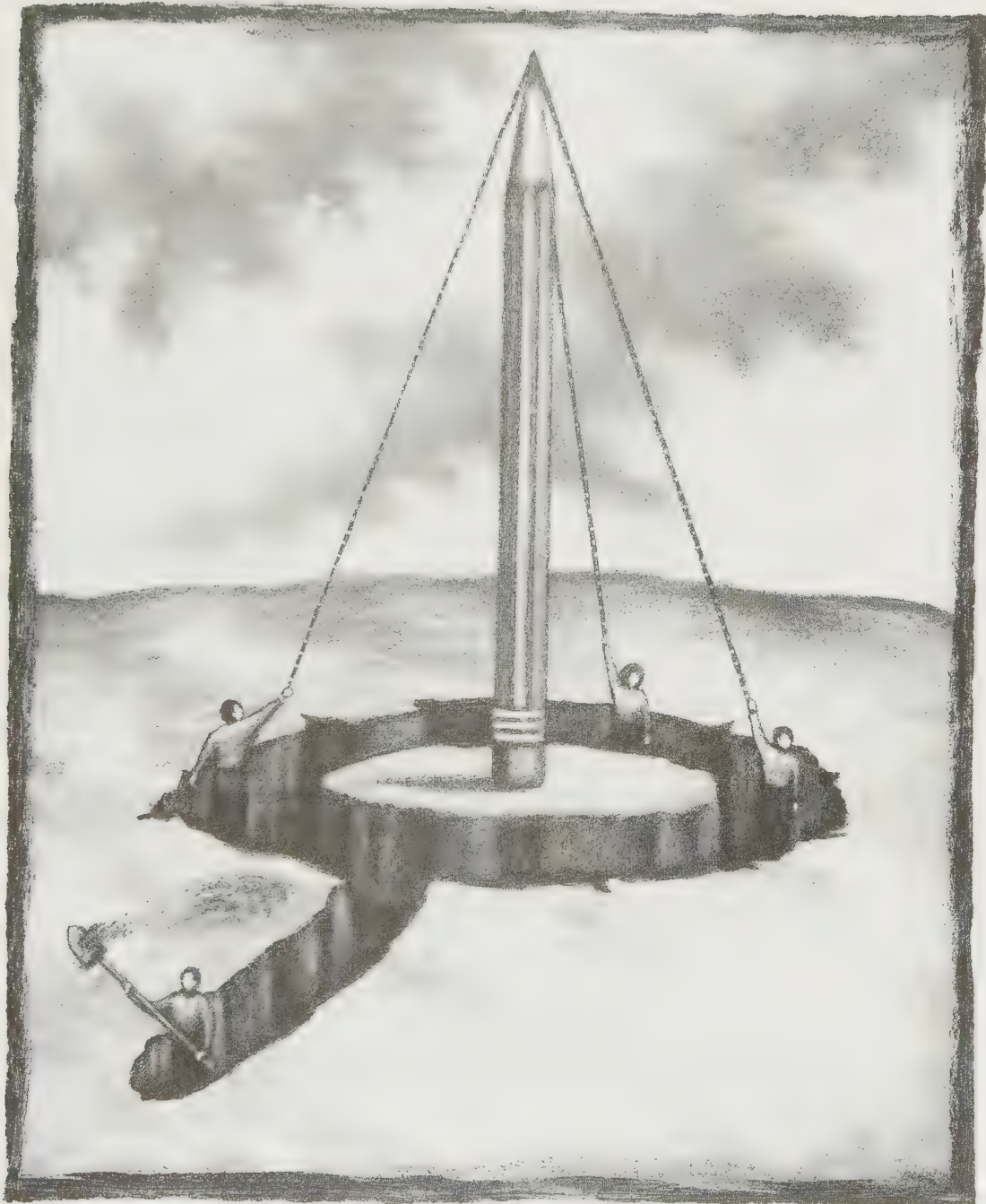
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## THINKING INDEPENDENTLY

Answer the following questions, based on what you believe to be true.

	Yes	No	Not Sure
1. Is the earth flat?			
2. Is there a God?			
3. Is abortion wrong?			
4. Have alien life forms visited the earth?			
5. Should men be the breadwinners and women the homemakers?			

Your responses to these questions reveal aspects of the way your mind works. How did you arrive at these conclusions? Your views on these and many other issues probably had their beginnings with your family, especially your parents. When we are young, we are very dependent on our parents, and we are influenced by the way they see the world. As we grow up, we learn how to think, feel, and behave in various situations. In addition to our parents, our “teachers” include our brothers and sisters, friends, religious leaders, schoolteachers, books, television, and so on. Most of what we learn we absorb with-



*Becoming a critical thinker transforms you in positive ways by enabling you to develop your own well-reasoned viewpoints and to make informed choices.*

out even being aware of the process. Many of your ideas about the issues raised in the preceding questions were most likely shaped by the experiences you had growing up.

As a result of our ongoing experiences, however, our minds—and our thinking—continue to mature. Instead of simply accepting the views of others, we gradually develop the ability to examine this thinking and to decide whether it makes sense to us and whether we should accept it. As we think through such ideas, we use this standard to make our decisions: Are there good reasons or evidence that support this thinking? If there are good reasons, we can actively decide to adopt these ideas. If they do not make sense, we can modify or reject them.

Of course, we do not *always* examine our own thinking or the thinking of others so carefully. In fact, we very often continue to believe the same ideas we were brought up with, without ever examining and deciding for ourselves what to think. Or we often blindly reject the beliefs we have been brought up with, without really examining them.

How do you know when you have examined and adopted ideas yourself instead of simply borrowing them from others? One indication of having thought through your ideas is being able to explain *why* you believe them, explaining the reasons that led you to these conclusions.

For each of the views you expressed at the beginning of this section, explain how you arrived at it and give the reasons and evidence that you believe support it.

1. *Example:* Is the earth flat?

*Explanation:* I was taught by my parents and in school that the earth was round.

*Reasons/Evidence:*

a. *Authorities:* My parents and teachers taught me this.

b. *References:* I read about this in science textbooks.

c. *Factual evidence:* I have seen a sequence of photographs taken from outer space that show the earth as a globe.

d. *Personal experience:* When I flew across the country, I could see the horizon line changing.

2. Is there a God?

3. Is abortion wrong?

4. Have alien life forms visited the earth?

5. Should men be the breadwinners and women the homemakers?

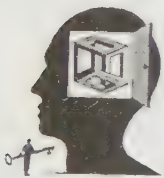


Of course, not all reasons and evidence are equally strong or accurate. For example, before the fifteenth century the common belief that the earth was flat was supported by the following reasons and evidence:

- *Authorities:* Educational and religious authorities taught people the earth was flat.
- *References:* The written opinions of scientific experts supported belief in a flat earth.
- *Factual evidence:* No person had ever circumnavigated the earth.
- *Personal experience:* From a normal vantage point, the earth *looks* flat.

Many considerations go into evaluating the strengths and accuracy of reasons and evidence, and we will be exploring these areas in this and future chapters. Let's examine some basic questions that critical thinkers automatically consider when evaluating reasons and evidence by completing Thinking Activity 2.3.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 2.3 *EVALUATING YOUR BELIEFS*



Evaluate the strengths and accuracy of the reasons and evidence you identified to support your beliefs on the five issues by addressing questions such as the following:

- *Authorities:* Are the authorities knowledgeable in this area? Are they reliable? Have they ever given inaccurate information? Do other authorities disagree with them?
- *References:* What are the credentials of the authors? Are there other authors who disagree with their opinions? On what reasons and evidence do the authors base their opinions?
- *Factual evidence:* What are the source and foundation of the evidence? Can the evidence be interpreted differently? Does the evidence support the conclusion?
- *Personal experience:* What were the circumstances under which the experiences took place? Were distortions or mistakes in perception possible? Have other people had either similar or conflicting experiences? Are there other explanations for the experience? ◀

Thinking for yourself doesn't always mean doing exactly what you want to; it may mean becoming aware of the social guidelines and expectations of a given situation and then making an informed decision about what is in your

best interests. For example, even though you may have a legal right to choose whatever clothes you want to wear at your workplace, if your choice doesn't conform to your employer's guidelines or "norms," then you may suffer unpleasant consequences as a result. In other words, thinking for yourself often involves balancing your view of things against those of others, integrating yourself into social structures without sacrificing your independence or personal autonomy.

Learning to become an independent, critical thinker is a complex, ongoing process that involves all the abilities we have been examining in this chapter up to this point:

- Thinking actively
- Carefully exploring situations with questions
- Thinking independently

As you confront the many decisions you have to make in your life, you should try to gather all the relevant information, review your priorities, and then carefully weigh all the factors before arriving at a final decision. One helpful strategy for exploring thinking situations is the one we have been practicing: *identify* the important questions that need to be answered and then try to *answer* these questions.

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## LOOKING CRITICALLY @ EVALUATING INTERNET INFORMATION



The information "superhighway" of the Internet is an incredibly rich source of information on virtually every subject that exists. But it's important to remember that information is not knowledge. Information doesn't become *knowledge* until we think critically about it. As a critical thinker, you should never accept information at face value without first establishing its accuracy, evaluating the credibility of the source, and determining the point of view or bias of the source. These are issues that we will explore throughout this book, but for now you can use the following checklist to evaluate the information on the Internet—and other sources as well.

After you have read through the checklist, log onto any Web site—either one you're already familiar with or one you've never visited before—and evaluate it by answering the questions in the checklist. Record your answers and then discuss your evaluation with other class members.

## ✓ CHECKLIST      Evaluating the Quality of Internet Resources

### Criterion 1: Authority

- ✓ Is it clear who sponsors the page and what the sponsor's purpose in maintaining the page is?
- ✓ Is it clear who wrote the material and what the author's qualifications for writing on this topic are?
- ✓ Is there a way of verifying the legitimacy of the page's sponsor; that is, is there a phone number or postal address to contact for more information? (Simply an e-mail address is not enough.)
- ✓ If the material is protected by copyright, is the name of the copyright holder given?

### Criterion 2: Accuracy

- ✓ Are the sources for any factual information clearly listed so they can be verified in another source?
- ✓ Has the sponsor provided a link to outside sources (such as product reviews or reports filed with the SEC) that can be used to verify the sponsor's claims?
- ✓ Is the information free of grammatical, spelling, and other typographical errors? (These kinds of errors not only indicate a lack of quality control but can actually produce inaccuracies in information.)
- ✓ Is statistical data in graphs and charts clearly labeled and easy to read?

- ✓ Does anyone monitor the accuracy of the information being published?

### Criterion 3: Objectivity

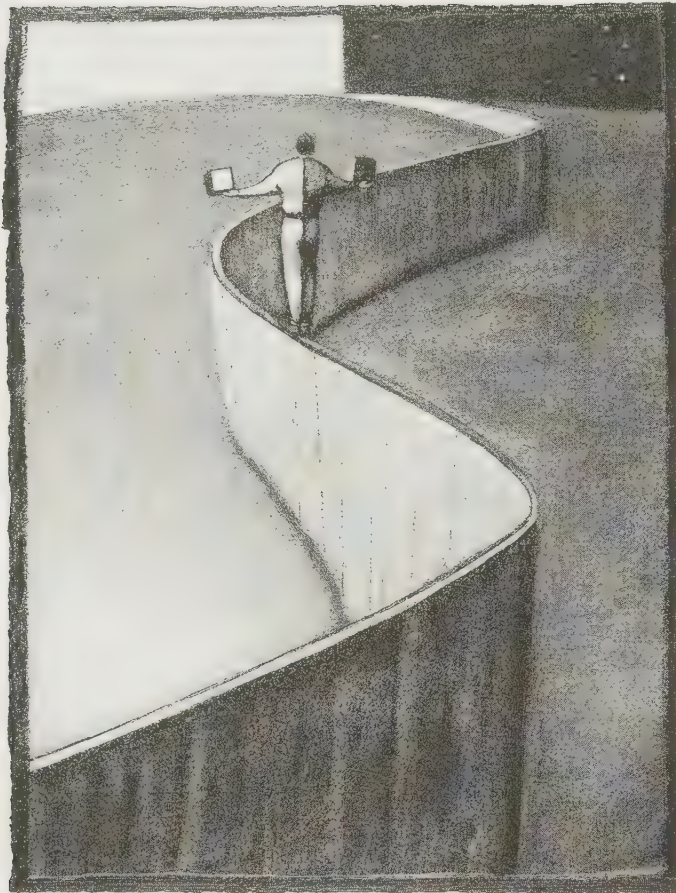
- ✓ For any given piece of information, is it clear what the sponsor's motivation is for providing it?
- ✓ Is the information content clearly separated from any advertising or opinion content?
- ✓ Is the point of view of the sponsor presented in a clear manner, with its arguments well supported?

### Criterion 4: Currentness

- ✓ Are there dates on the page to indicate when the page was written, first placed on the Web, and last revised?
- ✓ Are there any other indications that the material is kept current?
- ✓ If material is presented in graphs or charts, is it clearly stated when the data was gathered?
- ✓ Is there an indication that the page has been completed and is not still in the process of being developed?

*Source:* This material was compiled from a set of five checklists created by Jan Alexander and Marsha Tate, "Teaching Critical Evaluation Skills for World Wide Web Resources," 28 Oct. 1996. <http://www.widener.edu/libraries.html>. (Select link "Evaluating Web Resources.") Reprinted from *Computers in Libraries*, courtesy of Information Today, Inc., Medford, New Jersey.





*Critical thinkers are open to new ideas and different viewpoints, with the flexibility to explore all sides of an issue instead of being dogmatic and single-minded.*

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## VIEWING SITUATIONS FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Although it is important to think for yourself, others may have good ideas from which you can learn and benefit. A critical thinker is a person who is willing to listen to and examine carefully other views and new ideas. In addition to your

viewpoint, there may be other viewpoints that are equally important and need to be taken into consideration if you are to develop a more complete understanding of a situation.

As children we understand the world from only our own point of view. As we grow, we come into contact with people who have different viewpoints and begin to realize that our viewpoint is often inadequate, we are frequently mistaken, and our perspective is only one of many. If we are going to learn and develop, we must try to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others. For example, consider the following situation:

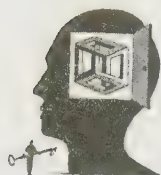
Imagine that you have been employed at a new job for the past six months. Although you enjoy the challenge of your responsibilities and you are performing well, you find that you simply cannot complete all your work during office hours. To keep up, you have to work late, take work home, and even occasionally work on weekends. When you explain this to your employer, she says that although she is sorry that the job interferes with your personal life, it has to be done. She suggests that you view these sacrifices as an investment in your future and that you should try to work more efficiently. She reminds you that there are many people who would be happy to have your position.

1. Describe this situation from your employer's standpoint, identifying reasons that might support her views.
2. Describe some different approaches that you and your employer might take to help resolve this situation.

For most of the important issues and problems in your life, one viewpoint is simply not adequate to provide a full and satisfactory understanding. To increase and deepen your knowledge, you must seek *other perspectives* on the situations you are trying to understand. You can sometimes accomplish this by using your imagination to visualize other viewpoints. Usually, however, you need to seek actively (and *listen to*) the viewpoints of others. It is often very difficult for people to see things from points of view other than their own, and if you are not careful, you can make the very serious mistake of thinking that the way you see things is the way things really are. In addition to identifying with perspectives other than your own, you also have to work to understand the *reasons* that support these alternate viewpoints. This approach deepens your understanding of the issues and also stimulates you to evaluate critically your beliefs.

## THINKING ACTIVITY 2.4

### ANALYZING A BELIEF FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES



Describe a belief of yours about which you feel very strongly. Then explain the reasons or experiences that led you to this belief.

Next, describe a point of view that is *different* from your belief. Identify some of the reasons that someone might hold this belief. A student example follows.

#### A BELIEF THAT I FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT

I used to think that we should always try everything in our power to keep a person alive. But now I strongly believe that a person has a right to die in peace and with dignity. The reason why I believe this now is because of my father's illness and death.

It all started on Christmas Day, December 25, when my father was admitted to the hospital. The doctor's diagnosed his condition as a heart attack. Following this episode, he was readmitted and discharged from several different hospitals. On June 18, he was hospitalized for what was initially thought to be pneumonia but which turned out to be lung cancer. He began chemotherapy treatments. When complications occurred, he had to be placed on a respirator. At first he couldn't speak or eat. But then they operated on him and placed the tube from the machine in his throat instead of his mouth. He was then able to eat and move his mouth. He underwent radiation therapy when they discovered he had three tumors in his head and that the cancer had spread all over his body. We had to sign a paper which asked us to indicate, if he should stop breathing, whether we would want the hospital to try to revive him or just let him go. We decided to let him go because the doctors couldn't guarantee that he wouldn't become brain-dead. At first they said that there was a forty percent chance that he would get off the machine. But instead of that happening, the percentage went down.



It was hard seeing him like that since I was so close to him. But it was even harder when he didn't want to see me. He said that by seeing me suffer, his suffering was greater. So I had to cut down on seeing him. Everybody that visited him said that he had changed dramatically. They couldn't even recognize him.

The last two days of his life were the worst. I prayed that God would relieve him of his misery. I had come very close to taking him off the machine in order for him not to suffer, but I didn't. Finally he passed away on November 22, with not the least bit of peace or dignity. The loss was great then and still is, but at least he's not suffering. That's why I believe that when people have terminal diseases with no hope of recovery, they shouldn't place them on machines to prolong their lives of suffering, but instead they should be permitted to die with as much peace and dignity possible.

Somebody else might believe very strongly that we should try everything in our power to keep people alive. It doesn't matter what kind of illness or disease the people have. What's important is that they are kept alive, especially if they are loved ones. Some people want to keep their loved ones alive with them as long as they can, even if it's by a machine. They also believe it is up to God and medical science to determine whether people should live or die. Sometimes doctors give them hope that their loved ones will recover, and many people wish for a miracle to happen. With these hopes and wishes in mind, they wait and try everything in order to prolong a life, even if the doctors tell them that there is nothing that can be done. ◀

Being open to new ideas and different viewpoints means being *flexible* enough to change or modify your ideas in the light of new information or better insight. Each of us has a tendency to cling to the beliefs we have been brought up with and the conclusions we have arrived at. If we are going to continue to

grow and develop as thinkers, however, we have to be willing to change or modify our beliefs when evidence suggests that we should. For example, imagine that you have been brought up with certain views concerning an ethnic group—African American, Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, or any other. As you mature and your experience increases, you may find that the evidence of your experience conflicts with the views you have been raised with. As critical thinkers, we have to be *open* to receiving this new evidence and *flexible* enough to change and modify our ideas on the basis of it.

In contrast to open and flexible thinking, *uncritical* thinking tends to be one-sided and close-minded. People who think this way are convinced that they alone see things as they really are and that everyone who disagrees with them is wrong. The words we use to describe this type of person include “dogmatic,” “subjective,” and “egocentric.” It is very difficult for such people to step outside their own viewpoints in order to see things from other people’s perspectives. Part of being an educated person is being able to think in an open-minded and flexible way.

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## SUPPORTING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES WITH REASONS AND EVIDENCE

When you are thinking critically, what you think makes sense, and you can give good reasons to back up your ideas. As we have seen and will continue to see throughout this book, it is not enough simply to take a position on an issue or make a claim; we have to *back up our views* with other information that we feel supports our position. In other words, there is an important distinction as well as relationship between *what* you believe and *why* you believe it.

If someone questions *why* you see an issue the way you do, you probably respond by giving reasons or arguments you feel support your belief. For example, take the question of what sort of college to attend: two-year or four-year, residential or commuting. What are some of the reasons you might offer to support your decision to attend the kind of college in which you enrolled?

Although all the reasons you just gave for attending your sort of college support your decision, some are obviously more important to you than others. In any case, even though going to your college may be the right thing for you to do, this decision does not mean that it is the right thing for everyone to do. In order for you to fully appreciate this fact, to see both sides of the issue, you have to put yourself in the position of others and try to see things from their points of view. What are some of the reasons or arguments someone might give for attending a different kind of college?

The responses you just gave demonstrate that, if you are interested in seeing all sides of an issue, you have to be able to give supporting reasons and evidence not just for *your* views, but for the views of *others* as well. Seeing all sides of an issue thus combines these two critical thinking abilities:

- Viewing issues from different perspectives
- Supporting diverse viewpoints with reasons and evidence

Combining these two abilities enables you not only to understand other views about an issue, but also to understand *why* these views are held. Consider the issue of whether seat-belt use should be mandatory. As you try to make sense of this issue, you should attempt to identify not just the reasons that support your view, but also the reasons that support other views. The following are reasons that support each view of this issue.

*Issue:*

Seat-belt use should be mandatory.

Seat-belt use should not be mandatory.

*Supporting Reasons:*

1. Studies show that seat belts save lives and reduce injury in accidents.

*Supporting Reasons:*

1. Many people feel that seat belts may trap them in a burning vehicle.

Now see if you can identify additional supporting reasons for each of these views on making use of seat belts mandatory.

*Supporting Reasons:*

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

*Supporting Reasons:*

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

## THINKING ACTIVITY 2.5 ANALYZING DIFFERENT SIDES OF AN ISSUE



For each of the following issues, identify reasons that support each side of the issue.

*Issue:*

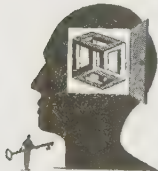
1. Multiple-choice and true/false exams should be given in college-level courses.

Multiple-choice and true/false exams should not be given in college-level courses.



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 2. Immigration quotas should be reduced.  | <i>Issue:</i><br>Immigration quotas should be increased   |
| 3. The best way to deal with crime is to give long prison sentences.                          | <i>Issue:</i><br>Long prison sentences will not reduce crime.   |
| 4. When a couple divorces, the children should choose the parent with whom they wish to live. | <i>Issue:</i><br>When a couple divorces, the court should decide all custody issues regarding the children. ◀ |

### THINKING ACTIVITY 2.6 ANALYZING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES



Working to see different perspectives is crucial in helping you get a more complete understanding of the ideas being expressed in the passages you are reading. Read each of the following passages and then do the following:

1. Identify the main idea of the passage.
2. List the reasons that support the main idea.
3. Develop another view of the main issue.
4. List the reasons that support the other view.

- Most wicked deeds are done because the doer proposes some good to himself. The liar lies to gain some end; the swindler and thief want things which, if honestly got, might be good in themselves. Even the murderer may be removing an impediment to normal desires or gaining possession of something which his victim keeps from him. None of these people usually does evil for evil's sake. They are selfish or unscrupulous, but their deeds are not gratuitously evil. The killer for sport has no such comprehensible motive. He prefers death to life, darkness to light. He gets nothing except the satisfaction of saying, "Something which wanted to live is dead. There is that much less vitality, consciousness, and, perhaps, joy in the universe. I am the Spirit that Denies." When a human wantonly destroys one of humankind's own works we call him Vandal. When he wantonly destroys one of the works of God we call him Sportsman.
- More than at any other time in history, America is plagued by the influence of cults, exclusive groups that present themselves as religions de-

voted to the worship of a single individual. Initially, most Americans were not terribly concerned with the growth of cults, but then in 1979, more than nine hundred cult members were senselessly slaughtered in the steamy jungles of a small South American country called Guyana. The reason for the slaughter was little more than the wild, paranoid fear of the leader, the Reverend Jim Jones, who called himself father and savior. Since that time, evidence has increased that another cult leader, the Reverend Sun Myung Moon, has amassed a large personal fortune from the purses of his followers, male and female “Moonies,” who talk of bliss while peddling pins and emblems preaching the gospel of Moon. Cults, with their hypnotic rituals and their promises of ecstasy, are a threat to American youth, and it is time to implement laws that would allow for a thorough restriction of their movements. ◀

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## DISCUSSING IDEAS IN AN ORGANIZED WAY

Thinking critically often takes place in a social context, not in isolation. Although it is natural for every person to have his or her own perspective on the world, no single viewpoint is adequate for making sense of complex issues, situations, or even people. As we will see in the chapters ahead, we each have our own “lenses” through which we view the world—filters that shape, influence, and often distort the way we see things. The best way to expand one’s thinking and compensate for the bias that we all have is to discuss our experiences with other people.

This is the way in which thinking develops: being open to the viewpoints of others and being willing to listen and to exchange ideas with them. This process of give-and-take, of advancing our views and considering those of others, is known as *discussion*. When we participate in a discussion, we are not simply talking; we are exchanging and exploring our ideas in an organized way.

Unfortunately, our conversations with other people about important topics are too often not productive exchanges. They often degenerate into name calling, shouting matches, or worse. Consider the following dialogue:

*Person A:* I have a friend who just found out that she’s pregnant and is trying to decide whether she should have an abortion or have the baby. What do you think?

*Person B:* Well, I think that having an abortion is murder. Your friend doesn't want to be a murderer, does she?

*Person A:* How can you call her a murderer? An abortion is a medical operation.

*Person B:* Abortion *is* murder. It's killing another human being, and your friend doesn't have the right to do that.

*Person A:* Well, you don't have the right to tell her what to do—it's her body and her decision. Nobody should be forced to have a child that is not wanted.

*Person B:* Nobody has the right to commit murder—that's the law.

*Person A:* But abortion isn't murder.

*Person B:* Yes, it is.

*Person A:* No, it isn't.

*Person B:* Good-bye! I can't talk to anyone who defends murderers.

*Person A:* And I can't talk to anyone who tries to tell other people how to run their lives.

If we examine the dynamics of this dialogue, we can see that the two people here are not really

- Listening to each other
- Supporting their views with reasons and evidence
- Responding to the points being made
- Asking—and trying to answer—important questions
- Trying to increase their understanding rather than simply winning the argument

In short, the people in this exchange are not *discussing* their views; they are simply *expressing* them, and each is trying to influence the other person into agreeing. Contrast this first dialogue with the following one. Although it begins the same way, it quickly takes a much different direction.

*Person A:* I have a friend who just found out that she's pregnant and is trying to decide whether she should have an abortion or have the baby. What do you think?

*Person B:* Well, I think that having an abortion is murder. Your friend doesn't want to be a murderer, does she?

*Person A:* Of course she doesn't want to be a murderer! But why do you believe that having an abortion is the same thing as murder?

*Person B:* Because murder is when we kill another human being, and when you have an abortion, you are killing another human being.



*Person A:* But is a fetus a human being yet? It certainly is when it is born. But what about before it's born, while it's still in the mother's womb? Is it a person then?

*Person B:* I think it is. Simply because the fetus hasn't been born doesn't mean that it isn't a person. Remember, sometimes babies are born prematurely, in their eighth or even seventh month of development. And they go on to have happy and useful lives.

*Person A:* I can see why you think that a fetus in the *last stages* of development—the seventh, eighth, or ninth month—is a person. After all, it can survive outside the womb with special help at the hospital. But what about at the *beginning* of development? Human life begins when an egg is fertilized by a sperm. Do you believe that the fertilized egg is a person?

*Person B:* Let me think about that for a minute. No, I don't think that a fertilized egg is a person, although many people do. I think that a fertilized egg has the *potential* to become a person—but it isn't a person yet.

*Person A:* Then at what point in its development do you think a fetus *does* become a person?

*Person B:* That's a good question, one that I haven't really thought about. I guess you could say that a fetus becomes a person when it begins to look like a person, with a head, hands, feet, and so on. Or you might say that a fetus becomes a person when all of its organs are formed—liver, kidneys, lungs, and so on. Or you might say that it becomes a person when its heart begins to start beating or when its brain is fully developed. Or you might say that its life begins when it can survive outside the mother. I guess determining when the fetus becomes a person all depends on the *standard* that you use.

*Person A:* I see what you're saying! Since the development of human life is a continuous process that begins with a fertilized egg and ends with a baby, deciding when the fetus becomes a person depends on at what point in the process of development you decide to draw the line. But *how* do you decide where to draw the line?

*Person B:* That's a good place to begin another discussion. But right now I have to leave for class. See you later.

How would you contrast the level of communication taking place in this dialogue with that in the first dialogue? What are the reasons for your conclusion?

Naturally, discussions are not always quite this organized and direct. Nevertheless, this second dialogue does provide a good model for what can take place in our everyday lives when we carefully explore an issue or a situation with someone else. Let us take a closer look at this discussion process.

### *Listening Carefully*

Review the second dialogue and notice how each person in the discussion *listens carefully* to what the other person is saying and then tries to comment directly on what has just been said. When you are working hard at listening to others, you are trying to understand the point they are making and the reasons for it. This enables you to imagine yourself in their position and see things as they see them. Listening in this way often brings new ideas and different ways of viewing the situation to your attention that might never have occurred to you. An effective dialogue in this sense is like a game of tennis—you hit the ball to me, I return the ball back to you, you return my return, and so on. The “ball” the discussants keep hitting back and forth is the subject they are gradually analyzing and exploring.

### *Supporting Views with Reasons and Evidence*

Critical thinkers support their points of view with evidence and reasons and also develop an in-depth understanding of the evidence and reasons that support other viewpoints. Review the second dialogue and identify some of the reasons used by the participants to support their points of view. For example, Person B expresses the view that “abortion is murder” and supports this view with the reasoning that “murder is killing another human being”; if a fetus is a human being, removing it from the womb prematurely is the same thing as murder.

### *Responding to the Points Being Made*

When people engage in effective dialogue, they listen carefully to the people speaking and then respond directly to the points being made instead of simply trying to make their own points. In the second dialogue, Person A responds to Person B’s view that “abortion is murder” with the question “But is a fetus a human being yet?” When you respond directly to other people’s views, and they to yours, you extend and deepen the explorations into the issues being discussed. Although people involved in the discussion may not ultimately agree, they should develop a more insightful understanding of the important issues and a greater appreciation of other viewpoints. Examine the sample dialogue and notice how each person keeps responding to what the other is saying, creating an ongoing, interactive discussion.

## *Asking Questions*

Asking questions is one of the driving forces in your discussions with others. You can explore a subject first by raising important questions and then by trying to answer them together. This questioning process gradually reveals the various reasons and evidence that support each of the different viewpoints involved. For example, although the two dialogues begin the same way, the second dialogue moves in a completely different direction from that of the first when Person A poses the question: “But *why* do you believe that having an abortion is the same thing as murder?” Asking this question directs the discussion toward a mutual exploration of the issues and away from angry confrontation. Identify some of the other key questions that are posed in the dialogue.

A guide to the various types of questions that can be posed in exploring issues and situations begins on page 52 of this chapter.

## *Increasing Understanding*

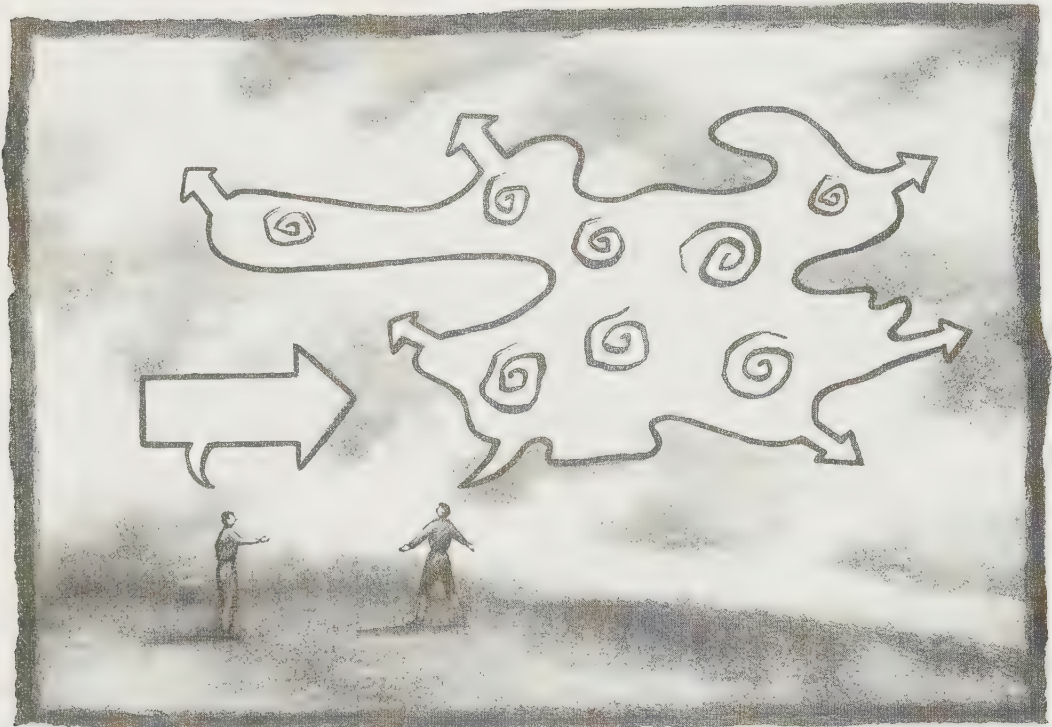
When we discuss subjects with others, we often begin by disagreeing with them. In fact, this is one of the chief reasons that we have discussions. In an effective discussion, however, our main purpose should be to develop our understanding—not to prove ourselves right at any cost. If we are determined to prove that we are right, then we are likely not to be open to the ideas of others and to viewpoints that differ from our own.

Imagine that instead of ending, the second dialogue had continued for a while. Create responses that expand the exploration of the ideas being examined, and be sure to keep the following discussion guidelines in mind as you continue the dialogue.

- When we discuss, we have to listen to each other.
- When we discuss, we keep asking—and trying to answer—important questions.
- When we discuss, our main purpose is to develop a further understanding of the subject we are discussing, not to prove that we are right and the other person is wrong.

*Person A:* I see what you’re saying! Since the development of human life is a continuous process that begins with a fertilized egg and ends with a baby, deciding when the fetus becomes a person depends on the point in the process of development at which you decide to draw the line. But *how* do you decide where to draw the line?

Etc.



*Success in college and careers involves expressing ideas clearly and listening to the ideas of others.*

### THINKING ACTIVITY 2.7 *CREATING A DIALOGUE*



Select an important social issue and write a dialogue that analyzes the issue from two different perspectives. As you write your dialogue, keep in mind the qualities of effective discussion: listening carefully to the other person and trying to comment directly on what has been said, asking and trying to answer important questions about the subject, and trying to develop a fuller understanding of the subject instead of simply trying to prove yourself right.



After completing your dialogue, read it to the class (with a classmate as a partner). Analyze the class's dialogues by using the criteria for effective discussions that we have examined. ◀

## LOOKING CRITICALLY @ COMMUNICATING ON THE INTERNET



"Since brevity is the soul of wit, and tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,—I will be brief." So said William Shakespeare in *Hamlet* (II. ii. 90). It's very possible that he predicted the coming of the electronic age with its communication tools like email, instant messaging, chat groups, and message boards. The fewer words used to convey an idea, the faster the idea can be received by the audience. And speed is of the essence in the modern world.

**Email** (electronic mail, by definition) is generally composed of short writings that are to the point, without formalities, typed into a memo-like template, and sent out to one or many addresses via an Internet service. But you need to consider a few things before taking mouse in hand. What kind of "letter" are you composing (business or personal)? Who is the recipient (a friend, a schoolteacher, a prospective employer, a business)? What kind of service is going to "send" your email, and what kind of service does your reader use? Let's talk about why these points are important.

Because some carriers, for your safety and privacy, let you adopt a nom de plume (called a *screen name* in cyberspeak), it is important that you clearly identify yourself to the recipient—and in formal writings, that means including your full "real" name. Keep in mind that the appearance of email can vary, depending upon the capability of the carrier as well as the receiver's computer and printer. It is important that only basic "typing" be used—black text, Arial or another basic font, no bold, no underlining, no italics, no tables, no varying sizes of lettering. Features that you use to enhance an email may not "translate" over the airwaves to your reader and may actually garble your text. Also, be cautious about how and what you are trying to say: the "tone" of your thoughts may not be understood if you write casually. Use acronyms and symbols sparingly; not everyone has yet learned the language of cyberspace, and peppering your paragraphs with "smileys" (faces drawn with the alphabet:-) or ASCII art (pictures drawn with the letters and symbols of the keyboard) can look like gibberish to the uninitiated.

Why use email at all? It's fast, it saves you time (no more searching for postage stamps, envelopes, or paper), it lets people communicate at their own

convenience (at 2 A.M. or 4 P.M.), and it's inexpensive (often just pennies for the cost of a local phone call). You can maintain a current, daily correspondence with your friends in Brazil, Germany, or next door without the worry of losing mail or the expense and chore of weighing packages and trekking to a post office. There is usually just a minimal time lag between the moment you press the Send button and the moment the recipient finds out she has "got mail."

For school and the workplace, email can be a savior. In addition to copying and pasting words into the email template, you can generally "attach" an electronic file (created in word processing or in a spreadsheet program, for example) as a tag along. This is a great way to hand in that term paper or take-home test, reply to a classified ad by sending your résumé to a prospective employer, or return a completed grant application. Be sure, however, to tell readers which software you used to create the attachment because they will have to use a compatible program to open the file. The days of "Please send your document by fax" are almost gone; today, everyone wants a copy of your "plain text" résumé via email. So be sure to lay it out simply, check the spelling and the syntax, and include a polite cover letter with your name, address, phone number, and any other ways the recruiter, company, school, or other person can contact you.

And what about **chat rooms**? As you may well know by now, *chat rooms*, *forums*, and *conference rooms* are means of communicating "live and in person" while signed onto an Internet service such as America Online. People with common interests (everything ranging from belonging to similar age groups to geography to hobbies) gather together in groups and "talk" to each other, generally with a "host" to introduce the "newbies" (newcomers), keep the chatter going, monitor the language, and ensure that behavior stays reasonable. The "room" display is set up much like a movie script, with a running dialogue shown along with the names of those people in the room and a space provided for you to type in a sentence or two and "send" your message to the room for viewing. In some cases, you can also initiate another feature called "Instant messaging" (IM) which allows you to send a quickly typed message to a friend whom you know is also online. You can then continue the conversation with only that person. Think of how much money you both can save on long distance phone charges if you both are only using a local phone call to connect to the Internet and "chat" with someone who lives far away!

Another interesting way to communicate on the Internet is to use **message** or **bulletin boards**. Much like the old-fashioned cork-board-and-paper notes you see in school or supermarket lobbies, these "boards" allow you to jot down a question or post a message and put it "out there" for the general public to see and respond to. Such message boards are often organized by topic, so

you can find them by searching an online service's index. One of the largest is Usenet, a network of newsgroups or electronic bulletin boards accessible through the Internet. (A newsreader program needs to be installed on the local computer system in order to access Usenet.) Selling a car? Arranging a high school reunion? Looking for a recipe for cookies? Want to find roommates for a vacation time-share? Having problems with a software application? Moving to a new town and want to find out what community groups are there? Many bulletin boards allow the person responding to your posting to also select a "return by email" feature. So, aside from your getting a personal answer to your question, you can also "browse" these boards to see if other people have posted questions and/or answers that can help you. These boards can be a great learning and research tool for someone who is just beginning to explore cyberspace. There's nothing like the experience of others to help you with your daily grind!

Finally, there is the issue of **netiquette** (a new word coined from Internet and etiquette). As the electronic age expands throughout the world, rules seem to develop on their own to go along with this new means of communication. Typing in all capitals is considered RUDE and means you are SHOUTING. "Scrolling"—typing the same thing over and over and over while in a chat room, thereby preventing others from "speaking" and making a nuisance of yourself—is also prohibited. Sending unsolicited mass mailings to people—called "spamming"—is a strict "no-no." Chain letters are also frowned upon. Foul language, profanity, and generally crass and juvenile behavior can result in a person's being temporarily cut off from an Internet service or even losing her online privileges permanently. Of course, anything illegal can even have the police knocking on your door. The Internet is a public space, and government regulation is only recently being developed to counter those who abuse the freedom of speech we cherish in our country. So, the trick is to use common sense when communicating over the Web and "speak" as you would to someone face to face—with self-control and politeness, exuberance and creativity, and simplicity—so that the message gets across!

As an assignment before the next class:

- *Email* at least one other student in the class.
- Participate in at least one *chat room*.
- Post at least one message on a *message* or *bulletin board*.

If you encounter difficulties in performing any of these activities, you can get help in the computer center at your college.

Describe your experiences and reactions to each of these experiences, and then engage in some critical thinking and write out your responses: how can

these forms of electronic communication improve your academic performance? Enrich your social life? Save you time and money? Enhance your communication skills? Now think critically about some of the potential liabilities or risks involved with this type of communication. Do you see the possibility of your spending *too* much time online—a kind of “Net addiction”? How might email contribute to misunderstandings or cause you to express something that you might later regret? What precautions should you take before giving your real name, phone number, or address to someone you have met online? What are some of the dangers of meeting an online “friend” in person?

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## BECOMING A CRITICAL THINKER

In this chapter we have discovered that critical thinking is not just one way of thinking—it is a total approach to the way we make sense of the world, and it involves an integrated set of thinking abilities and attitudes that include the following:

- *Thinking actively* by using our intelligence, knowledge, and skills to question, explore, and deal effectively with ourselves, others, and life’s situations
- *Carefully exploring situations* by asking—and trying to answer—relevant questions
- *Thinking independently* by carefully examining various ideas and arriving at our own thoughtful conclusions
- *Viewing situations from different perspectives* to develop an in-depth, comprehensive understanding and *supporting viewpoints with reasons and evidence* to arrive at thoughtful, well-substantiated conclusions
- *Discussing ideas in an organized way* in order to exchange and explore ideas with others

These critical thinking qualities are a combination of cognitive abilities, basic attitudes, and thinking strategies that enable you to clarify and improve your understanding of the world. By carefully examining the process and products of your thinking—and the thinking of others—you develop insight into the thinking process and learn to do it better. Becoming a critical thinker does not simply involve mastering certain thinking abilities, however; it affects the entire way that you view the world and live your life. For example, the process of striving to understand other points of view in a situation changes the way



you think, feel, and behave. It catapults you out of your own limited way of viewing things, helps you understand others' viewpoints, and broadens your understanding. All of these factors contribute to your becoming a sophisticated thinker and mature human being.

Becoming a critical thinker is a lifelong process. Developing the thinking abilities needed to understand the complex world you live in and to make informed decisions requires ongoing analysis, reflection, and practice. The qualities of critical thinking that you have explored in this chapter represent signposts in your journey to become a critical thinker.

Critical thinkers are better equipped to deal with the difficult challenges that life poses: to solve problems, to establish and achieve goals, and to make sense of complex issues. The foundation of thinking abilities and critical attitudes introduced in these first two chapters will be reinforced and elaborated upon in the chapters ahead, helping to provide you with the resources to be successful at college, in your chosen career, and throughout the other areas of your life as well.

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## CREATING A THINKING WORLD

Becoming a critical thinker is not an isolated activity that is accomplished in a social vacuum. It's just the opposite! We are naturally social creatures, tied to one another in profound and complex ways. Fulfilling your potential as a critical thinker and living a meaningful life means developing productive relationships with others. As we have seen, critical thinkers are people who consistently make the effort to view situations from others' perspectives, to think—and feel—empathetically within their own point of view. This empathetic understanding is the basis for developing healthy relationships and an in-depth understanding of the world.

Unfortunately, many people are not striving to become critical thinkers, and as a result, a great amount of thoughtless, self-absorbed behavior is rampant in our society. In contrast, let's imagine a world in which *everyone* was committed to the critical thinking ideal of thoughtful reflection and empathetic understanding. What would such a world be like?

It would be a world in which people would not act rashly or speak foolishly without thinking. They would be reflective, carefully considering different points of view and thinking deeply about important issues. People would listen to what you had to say and would treat your views with respect, and if they disagreed with your point of view, they would explain why by providing

intelligent reasons. At work, your boss would provide you with personal support and opportunities to take initiative, guiding you when you made mistakes, encouraging you to excel, and awarding you full credit for your accomplishments. Your relationships with family members would always be loving and honest as you worked together harmoniously for common purposes. Your relationship with your romantic partner would be intimate and supportive, expressing deep commitment and emotional honesty. Parents would nurture their children with unconditional love and raise them to respect the needs of others. People of all ages would display enlightened values, empathizing with the needs of others and trying to help those less fortunate. Lying, cheating, stealing, personal violence: none of these would exist; instead, they would be replaced by kindness, generosity, consideration, and goodwill. This would be a world filled with open-minded people who would welcome diverse ideas, customs, and personal differences. Racism, sexism, ageism, and all other forms of discrimination would be things of the past as all people would be treated with tolerance and consideration.

On a social level, all people would see themselves as members of the same community, with a responsibility for the well-being of all members, not just for themselves. Everyone would work together to create a better life for all. Wise and principled political leaders would be elected by a thoughtful citizenry, and they would govern with insight, honesty, and compassion. Children would be educated in a system that encouraged their individual talents and respected their unique value. Television shows would be designed to stimulate thinking and expand understanding as well as to entertain. People on talk shows would express thoughtful, articulate opinions, never stooping to superficial analyses or personal insults. On the road, people would drive with safety and consideration, never letting their anger or desire to move ahead more quickly take hold of them at the expense of others. When people did make mistakes, they would always accept responsibility, never trying to blame others for their own errors. Those who violated the law would be tried by juries who were astute thinkers, weighing the evidence judiciously and reaching fair-minded and well-supported verdicts.

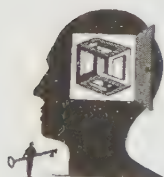
On a personal level, you would be confident of your place in society and taken seriously by others who respected your special qualities. People would treat you with consideration, and you would reciprocate, with feelings of goodwill overwhelming any doubts or suspicions. You would think the best of people, and they would respond in kind. You would live your life under what philosophers used to call "the aspect of eternity," reflecting on the purpose of your existence and your connections to humanity and the universe. When working with others, your productive discussions would always move toward the most

logical and informed conclusions. You would be able to navigate intelligently through the daily avalanche of information, separating the useful from the irrelevant. You would have a deep understanding of complex social issues and would enjoy exploring their nuances through constructive conversations. You would live your life creatively, expressing yourself freely without fear of social condemnation. Your life would be vibrant, filled with satisfying relationships and accomplishments in which you would take great pride. You would enjoy the admiration of others as you steered a purposeful course which reflected your profound self-understanding. You would feel secure, strong, loved, happy, and fulfilled.

What would a world populated with critical thinkers be like? It would be a sublime world, the kind of world you would love to live in, the kind of world you would want for your children. It would be a world in which all people were able to achieve their personal potential, echoing the words of the writer Henry Miller:

We are all part of things,  
We are all part of creation, all kings, all poets, all musicians,  
We have only to open up, to discover what is already there.

### THINKING PASSAGES *ASSISTED SUICIDE*



One useful strategy for developing our critical thinking abilities is to contrast the views of people who discuss different sides of the same issue. The three articles that follow explore different perspectives on the issue of euthanasia (assisted suicide), focusing on the actions of Dr. Jack Kevorkian. Dr. Kevorkian—or “Dr. Death,” as he is commonly called—has long argued that assisted suicide should be a free and legal choice for patients. Having been acquitted of murder charges several times for providing patients with the means to kill themselves by using a “suicide machine” of his own design, he recently took the dramatic step of having “60 Minutes” televise a tape of him giving a fatal injection to a man with Lou Gehrig’s disease.

The controversy over assisted suicide has existed for several thousand years, but advances in modern medical technology are making these issues more acute today. The term *euthanasia*, first used by Aristotle in Ancient Greece to describe “the good death,” exists in two distinct forms:

- *passive* euthanasia, in which life-sustaining measures are withdrawn, permitting people to die of their own medical problems

- *active* euthanasia, in which active measures are taken to end someone's life, such as administering a lethal injection

Apply the skills that we have been developing in this chapter by thinking critically about the ideas in the reading selections and then answering the questions that follow.

**PROSECUTOR TO WEIGH POSSIBILITY OF CHARGING KEVORKIAN**  
**by Pam Belluck**

A Michigan prosecutor said today that he would carefully review the videotapes of Dr. Jack Kevorkian injecting a terminally ill man with a lethal series of drugs, which [were] shown on television tonight, and other evidence before deciding whether to prosecute him.

Dr. Kevorkian said he had given CBS the videotapes, hoping that his actions in the death of the man, Thomas Youk, would lead to his arrest and become a dramatic test for euthanasia and assisted suicide.

"I want a showdown," Dr. Kevorkian told the *Oakland Press* of Michigan, in his only interview about the broadcast. "I want to be prosecuted for euthanasia. I am going to prove that this is not a crime, ever, regardless of what words are written on paper."

During the CBS News program *60 Minutes*, Dr. Kevorkian is shown arranging the death of Mr. Youk, 52, of Waterford, Mich., said to be in the advanced stages of Lou Gehrig's disease. Dr. Kevorkian presents a consent form to Mr. Youk, who signed it. He asks Mr. Youk if he needs more time to think about his decision, saying, "Let's not hurry into this."

Then Dr. Kevorkian is shown, two nights later on Sept. 17, injecting Mr. Youk with drugs to make him sleep, then stop breathing, then to stop his heart from beating. When asked during the broadcast if he had killed Mr. Youk, Dr. Kevorkian said, "I did."

Dr. Kevorkian said this was not an assisted suicide, but euthanasia.

Today, the Oakland County prosecutor, David Gorcyca, suggested that the decision about whether to prosecute Dr. Kevorkian in the Youk case was not clear-cut. "We're going to have to review it from beginning to end," Mr. Gorcyca said.

Among the issues: whether Mr. Youk clearly consented to have Dr. Kevorkian help him die, Mr. Gorcyca said. He said his office was trying to obtain two unedited videotapes showing Dr. Kevorkian's conduct in Mr. Youk's death, and would try to get them with a search warrant or a subpoena if *60 Minutes* or Dr. Kevorkian did not surrender them voluntarily. Mr. Gorcyca said



one tape showed "Kevorkian advising him how he's going to do it and then there's a tape of how he does it."

A Michigan law that took effect on Sept. 1 is the state's latest effort to outlaw assisted suicide. Between 1994 and 1996, Dr. Kevorkian, whose license to practice medicine has been revoked in Michigan and California, was tried and acquitted three times of charges related to the deaths of five people in Michigan. A fourth case ended in mistrial. He says he has helped more than 130 people kill themselves.

On *60 Minutes*, Dr. Kevorkian said that if he was convicted, he would starve himself to death in prison.

"I am tired of all the hypocrisy," he said to the newspaper, "and we're going to end this, one way or another."

Mr. Youk, who restored old Porsches and was an amateur race car driver, was so weak that the county medical examiner, Dr. Ljubisa Dragovich, said he would not have had the strength to inject himself. Today, the telephone number at the Youk home was out of order and there was no answer at the home of Mr. Youk's brother, Robert.

On the *60 Minutes* broadcast, Mr. Youk's wife, Melody, says that she was "so grateful to know that someone would relieve him of his suffering."

"I don't consider it murder," Ms. Youk said. "I consider it the way things should be done."

The consent form that Mr. Youk signed indicated that he consented to die by "direct injection" instead of using Dr. Kevorkian's "suicide machine," in which patients pull a string or trip a switch to administer the lethal dose themselves, according to the interview in the *Oakland Press*.

He told the newspaper, and *60 Minutes*, that he would prefer if all such patients opted for injections, because they were "faster, cleaner and easier" than the machine.

Dr. Kevorkian said he gave Mr. Youk the injection and videotaped the process, including his struggle to find a suitable vein in Mr. Youk's arm. He said it was the first time he had recorded the "actual event" of a death.

"See, look at the head," he said in the newspaper interview, as he pointed out details in the tape. "You can see he is dying. He is in such a deep sleep, there is no suffering."

When Dr. Kevorkian was asked in the *Oakland Press* interview if Mr. Youk had any last words, he laughed, possibly because Mr. Youk's words were barely intelligible.

"I don't know," he responded. "I never understood a thing he said."

Dr. Kevorkian's lawyer, David Gorosh, said he was not consulted about his client's plans to have the tape broadcast on national television. "I certainly

didn't advise him to send the tape to *60 Minutes*," Mr. Gorosh said. "As a legal adviser, I certainly wouldn't advise him to do that."

Mr. Gorosh said he believed that "Dr. Kevorkian is simply indicating 'Either prosecute me and leave it there, or don't prosecute me and let's leave it once and for all.'"

Victor Skirmants, a close friend of Mr. Youk and a fellow auto racer said today that he did not know about Mr. Youk's desire to end his life. But he said he had seen his friend become increasingly incapacitated and suffer greatly in the last two years.

"It's a decision I myself would make," said Mr. Skirmants, 53. I couldn't go beyond the point where I just couldn't function at all. I understand what he did."

Still, Mr. Skirmants said he did not want to watch the *60 Minutes* broadcast. He said he was tremendously relieved when Ms. Youk asked him and his wife not to watch.

"The fact that I don't have to see the video—I'm very thankful," Mr. Skirmants said. "I want to remember him the way I knew him." ■

### **60 MINUTES, KEVORKIAN AND A DEATH FOR THE CAMERAS** by Caryn James

It is not a gracefully composed camera shot: Dr. Jack Kevorkian blocks the camera's view as he injects his incurably ill patient, Thomas Youk, with lethal drugs. Sitting upright, wearing his glasses and a plaid shirt, Mr. Youk has been given a sedative and his head has lolled back out of camera range; perhaps because we cannot see his face, the off-camera voices commenting as they watch this videotape are more chilling than anything on screen.

"Is he dead now?" Mike Wallace asks.

"He's dying now," Dr. Kevorkian says.

The broadcast of Mr. Youk's death, shown last night on the CBS News Program *60 Minutes*, caused exactly the flurry of media attention Dr. Kevorkian and CBS were looking for. The report was denounced by everyone from George Will on the ABC News program *This Week* to John Cardinal O'Connor from the pulpit of St. Patrick's Cathedral, which simply made the critics part of the hype machine.

Mr. Youk, a 52-year-old man suffering the degeneration of Lou Gehrig's disease, asked Dr. Kevorkian to help him die. The doctor seized an opportunity to cross the legal line from assisted suicide, enabling patients to kill themselves, to euthanasia, actively administering a lethal injection.

But deeper boundaries were crossed as well. That this death was staged for the cameras is the most unsettling aspect of the story, a dark corollary to the



*Dr. Jack Kevorkian, left, and Mike Wallace, on the CBS News program 60 Minutes. When asked if he had killed Thomas Youk, 52, of Waterford, Mich., Dr. Kevorkian said, "I did."*

growing assumption that the untelevised life is not worth living. Mr. Youk's untelevised death did not seem good enough for Dr. Kevorkian. The taping and its broadcast are, in the crudest terms, a stunt death.

The *60 Minutes* broadcast does not come in isolation, though. It is part of a climate in which many of life's most intimate areas are common grist for the media.

When President Clinton's illicit sex life made headlines, he responded in part by publicizing his meetings with spiritual advisers. If sex and religion have gone public, no wonder death has finally made an appearance on a Top 10 program, whose producers cannot be sorry this report appeared in the November sweeps period, when ratings turn into advertising dollars.

The fact that Dr. Kevorkian made the tape himself, and later brought it to *60 Minutes*, is beside the point. Dr. Kevorkian admits on the air that he wants the tape to lead to his arrest. By broadcasting it, CBS goes beyond reporting the news and becomes complicit, the carrier of a death played for the cameras.

It is that staged quality, evident in Mr. Youk's two taped encounters with Dr. Kevorkian, that is especially troubling. The *60 Minutes* report begins with

Mr. Youk's first meeting with Dr. Kevorkian, which was videotaped. That tape turns out to be even more distressing than the moment of death. Mr. Youk is barely able to lift his hand, and is obviously struggling to speak and to breathe. He fears choking on his own saliva.

That tape, so painful to watch, makes it clear why Mr. Youk and his family turned to Dr. Kevorkian. Ironically, it makes the case for assisted suicide more powerfully than the death scene, which is so calm it seems anticlimactic as Dr. Kevorkian gives Mr. Youk three injections.

Watching the death adds nothing to the legitimate debate about euthanasia. Think about the equivalent: a news report about a grisly murder that goes on to show dismembered body parts. In televising this death, *60 Minutes* goes beyond reporting into lurid sensationalism. But without the death tape, no one would have noticed yet another feature on Dr. Kevorkian.

The *60 Minutes* report includes a brief attempt at balance. Dr. Mark Siegler, a medical ethicist at the University of Chicago, calls Dr. Kevorkian's action "a medicalized killing" and says it is "dangerous to patients and dangerous to society."

But the report races past its most profound and troubling issues, of free will and privacy. Dr. Kevorkian says that when he suggested euthanasia rather than assisted suicide to Mr. Youk, "I sensed a reluctance in him." Later we see Mr. Youk agreeing as Dr. Kevorkian reads aloud a statement for him to sign, stating there has been no duress, but we haven't a clue how that reluctance was overcome.

When Mr. Wallace interviews the Youk family after the death, Mr. Youk's wife says of his choice to die: "Tom's very private. And also he believes it's a private issue. You should be able to do what makes sense to you." She seems unaware of the irony that this private moment would be broadcast to the world.

The media landscape that fosters such a broadcast has changed radically in the past few years.

In 1994, the ABC News program *Prime Time Live* showed part of a Dutch documentary, *Death on Request*, in which a man with Lou Gehrig's disease died by his doctor's injection. Since then, the influence of the Internet has been pervasive.

As he was dying of cancer in 1996, Timonthy Leary charted his last days on his Web site, where he planned to show his eventual suicide, though in the end he died off camera. This summer [1998] a baby's birth was shown on the Internet while it happened. And as the recent trajectory of political gossip has shown, a shaky bridge has been built from the Internet, with its editorial free-for-all, to the mainstream media. (Word of Representative Henry J. Hyde's decades-old adultery traveled in a flash from the on-line magazine Salon to newspapers and television.)



By showing Mr. Youk's death, *60 Minutes* creeps closer not only to the Internet but also to the lowest and literally cheapest form of television, reality programming. Whether it's *America's Funniest Home Videos* or *World's Wildest Police Videos*, reality programs foster the sense that real life is mere fodder for television; from there it is a small step to a life and now a death literally made for TV.

What is poignantly clear from the report is that Mr. Youk died without his family around him. They were sent away before Dr. Kevorkian began his injections, to avoid the chance they might be implicated in any crime. The television audience eventually watched, but we are not his family, a distinction *60 Minutes* blurred in its frightening conflation of public and private.

The shabby camera work at Mr. Youk's death spared us the worst horrors. The next televised death may be less amateurish and all the more disturbing as it looks straight into the eyes of a person who has agreed to die for the camera. ■

### IN NO HURRY FOR NEXT LEG OF THE JOURNEY

by David Gonzalez

The waning afternoon sunlight slipped into the rooms of Calvary Hospital in the Bronx. Outside, the trees looked like propped-up sticks, gray, crooked and ready for winter. Inside, it was warm and quiet, in anticipation of a bigger chill. Michael Burke lay in his bed, the latest stop in a medical journey that started in September with treatment at another hospital for a cancer that spread from his colon to his lung and brain.

"The doctors think I'm terminal," he said. "I think I'm terminal."

Calvary Hospital bills itself as the country's only specialty hospital for adults in the final stages of advanced cancer. It is not a hospice, since its patients require constant medical attention to stabilize them and ease their pain. Doctors tend to nearly every aspect of a patient's physical and emotional comfort as well as helping families that are emotionally battered by the disease.

Doctors at Calvary, which started almost 100 years ago in a Greenwich Village house, see their work as a counterpoint to those who advocate "a definitive medical response" to terminal illness. In plain English, they offer the dying patient an alternative to assisted suicide. It's not a place that Dr. Jack Kevorkian, who was ordered this week to stand trial on murder charges for his role in a suicide shown on television, has ever visited.

Mr. Burke, 45, a mechanical contractor, understands how frustration and despair drive some people to suicide, even if they have received the best care. But he does not consider that an option, and he is alarmed by Dr. Kevorkian's increasingly brazen attempts to force the issue.

"He seems seriously aggressive about it," Mr. Burke said. "But what constitutes the envelope of what he considers candidates for euthanasia would become bigger and bigger. I think people need to make it difficult for guys like that."

Calvary operates under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, so its opposition to suicide hews to church teaching. Its patients—200 on any given day—represent many faiths. In rare cases, critically ill patients arrive at the hospital asking for a quick end. More common are feelings of depression or emotional suffering, which, if not addressed by doctors, psychiatrists and social workers, could lead to desperate yearnings.

"Depression is more painful than physical pain," said Dr. Michael Brescia, the hospital's medical director. "Emotional suffering is the absence of love. This is a time when people have to say final farewells to their children. There are no more holidays. No future. You're not in this life, you're on the outside looking in. Everybody else has a life and you don't have one. Most people, if they ask for suicide, it's from the emotional aspects of this disease."

Those emotional hardships, doctors said, aren't made any easier by the difficulties patients have in persuading their health maintenance organizations to allow them to seek appropriate care in other hospitals, or at least let them check into Calvary when death is near. Dr. James Cimino, director of Calvary's palliative care institute, said the medical run-around has been exploited by proponents of assisted suicide, who present euthanasia as a dignified response to the indignities of the health care bureaucracy.

"Kevorkian forced us as a society to ask why people want to die prematurely," Dr. Cimino said. "But we should have confronted it before."

He knows that other doctors—good, well-meaning ones—also support euthanasia. But each day he sees patients who resist an early demise. "Maybe it's something about the nature of the person that they have this suffering, yet they don't request suicide," he said. "I don't want to get into the philosophy of that."

But Michael Burke does.

"Kevorkian is assuming there's nothing out there after this," he said. "I assume there is. I think that's where we part company."

He said that as long as he was comfortable—and he was—he had no problem. Suicide, he said, would be unfair to his wife and two children.

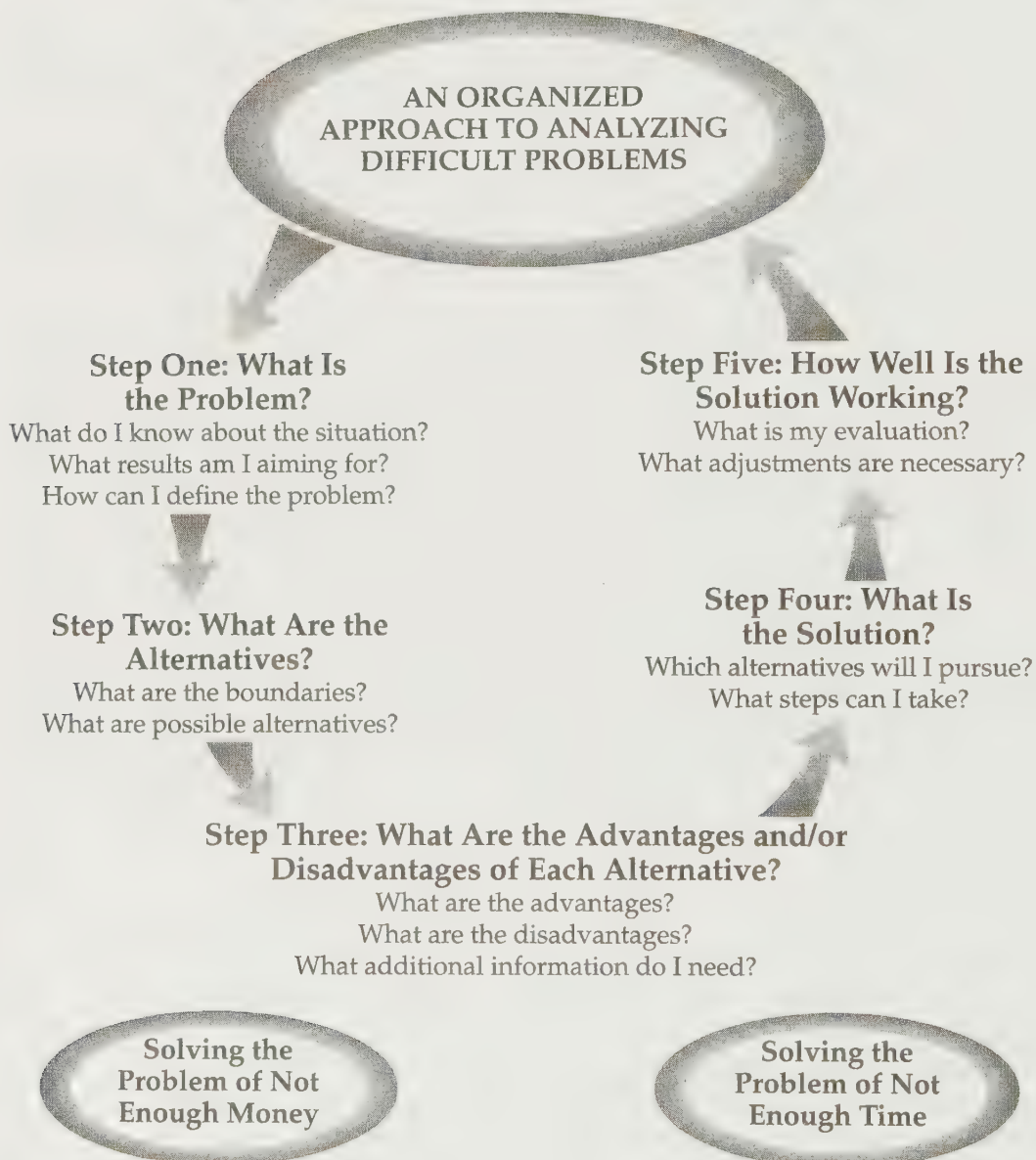
"I wouldn't want them to believe Daddy had the option of pushing this button and leaving," he said. "I'm not trying to squeeze every last moment. But if I can live for a week and see my son one more time, I would. As opposed to seeing Kevorkian this afternoon. Not that I think they would let him in the door here."

He gave a small smile and a thumbs-up sign. The gesture was his own definitive response. ■

### *Questions for Analysis*

1. People who support euthanasia, in its active and/or passive forms, believe that the right to die is as integral a part of our human freedoms as the right to live. Based on your reading of the articles, cite reasons that support this way of thinking.
2. People opposed to euthanasia believe that we do not have the right to end a life prematurely, even when someone is in the last stages of a terminal disease or is being kept alive by life-sustaining equipment. Based on your reading of the articles, cite reasons that support this perspective.
3. The two terminally ill men described in these articles, Thomas Youk and Michael Burke, are in very similar medical situations, yet they come to very different conclusions about ending their own lives. Explain why you think that each man came to his particular conclusion.
4. Some people are concerned that legally permitting people to decide that their medical conditions are "hopeless" or "terminal" and that they are thus justified to end their lives establishes an elastic criterion that will inevitably lead to abuse and unnecessary deaths. Identify some of the potential abuses that might occur if society enacts laws legitimizing each of these different forms of euthanasia (as is already beginning to happen) and describe strategies that might be used to avoid these abuses.
5. The patient in the videotape (*Thinking Towards Decisions*) that accompanies this chapter is in a comatose state, being kept alive with a ventilator and feeding tube. Explain how people with differing views on euthanasia would analyze the family's situation and the choices they ought to make. Have you even been involved in a euthanasia situation with a family member or friend? Describe your experience. ◀

# CHAPTER 3 SOLVING PROBLEMS





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## THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT PROBLEMS

THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE, you are continually solving problems, including the many minor problems that you solve each day: negotiating a construction delay on the road, working through an unexpected difficulty at your job, helping an upset child deal with a disappointment. As a student, you are faced with a steady stream of academic assignments, quizzes, exams, and papers. Relatively simple problems like these do not require a systematic or complex analysis. You can solve them with just a little effort and concentration. For example, in order to do well on an exam, you need to *define* the problem (what areas will the exam cover, and what will be the format?), identify and evaluate various *alternatives* (what are possible study approaches?), and then put all these factors together to reach a *solution* (what will be your study plan and schedule?). But the difficult and complicated problems in life require more attention.

The idea of “having a problem” certainly conjures up unpleasant associations for most people, but the truth is that solving problems is an integral and natural part of the process of living. It is the human ability to solve problems that accounts for our successful longevity on this planet. At the same time, it is our *inability* to solve problems that has resulted in senseless wars, unnecessary famine, and irrational persecution. You can undoubtedly discern this same duality in your own life: your most satisfying accomplishments are likely to be the consequence of successful problem-solving, while your greatest disappointments probably resulted at least in part from your failure to solve some crucial problems. For example, think about some of the very difficult problems you have solved through dedication and intelligent action. How did your success make you feel? What were some of the positive results of your success? On the other hand, review some of the significant problems that you were not able to solve. What were some of the negative consequences of your failed efforts? The psychiatrist and author M. Scott Peck sums up the centrality of problems in our lives:

Problems call forth our courage and our wisdom; indeed, they create our courage and our wisdom. It is only because of problems that we grow mentally and spiritually. When we desire to encourage the growth of the human spirit, we challenge and encourage the human capacity to solve problems, just as in school we deliberately set problems for our children to solve.

Problems are the crucible that forges the strength of our characters. When you are tested by life, forced to overcome adversity and think your way through

the most challenging situations—you will emerge a more intelligent, resourceful, and resilient person. However, if you lead a sheltered existence which insulates you from life's trials, or if you flee from situations at the first sign of trouble—then you will be weak and unable to cope with the eruptions and explosions that are bound to occur in your carefully protected world. Adversity reveals for all to see the person you have become, the character you have created. As the Roman philosopher and poet Lucretius explained, "So it is more useful to watch a man in times of peril, and in adversity to discern what kind of man he is; for then, at last, words of truth are drawn from the depths of his heart, and the mask is torn off, reality remains."

The quality of your life can be traced in large measure to your competency as a problem-solver. The fact that some people are consistently superior problem-solvers is largely due to their ability to approach problems in an informed and organized way. Less competent problem-solvers just muddle through when it comes to confronting adversity, using hit-or-miss strategies that rarely provide the best results. How would you rate yourself as a problem-solver? Do you generally approach difficulties confidently, analyze them clearly, and reach productive solutions? Or do you find that you often get "lost" and confused in such situations, unable to understand the problem clearly and to break out of mental ruts? Of course, you may find that you are very adept at solving problems in one area of your life—such as your job—and miserable at solving problems in other areas, such as your love life or your relationships with your children.

If you are less able to solve complex and challenging problems than you would like to be, don't despair! Becoming an expert problem-solver is not a genetic award; it is, for the most part, a learned skill that you can develop by practicing and applying the principles described in this chapter. You can learn to view problems as *challenges*, opportunities for growth instead of obstacles or burdens. You can become a person who attacks adversity with confidence and enthusiasm. This possibility may seem unlikely to you at this point, but I can assure you that, based on my experience teaching thousands of people for the past twenty years, becoming an expert problem-solver is well within your grasp.

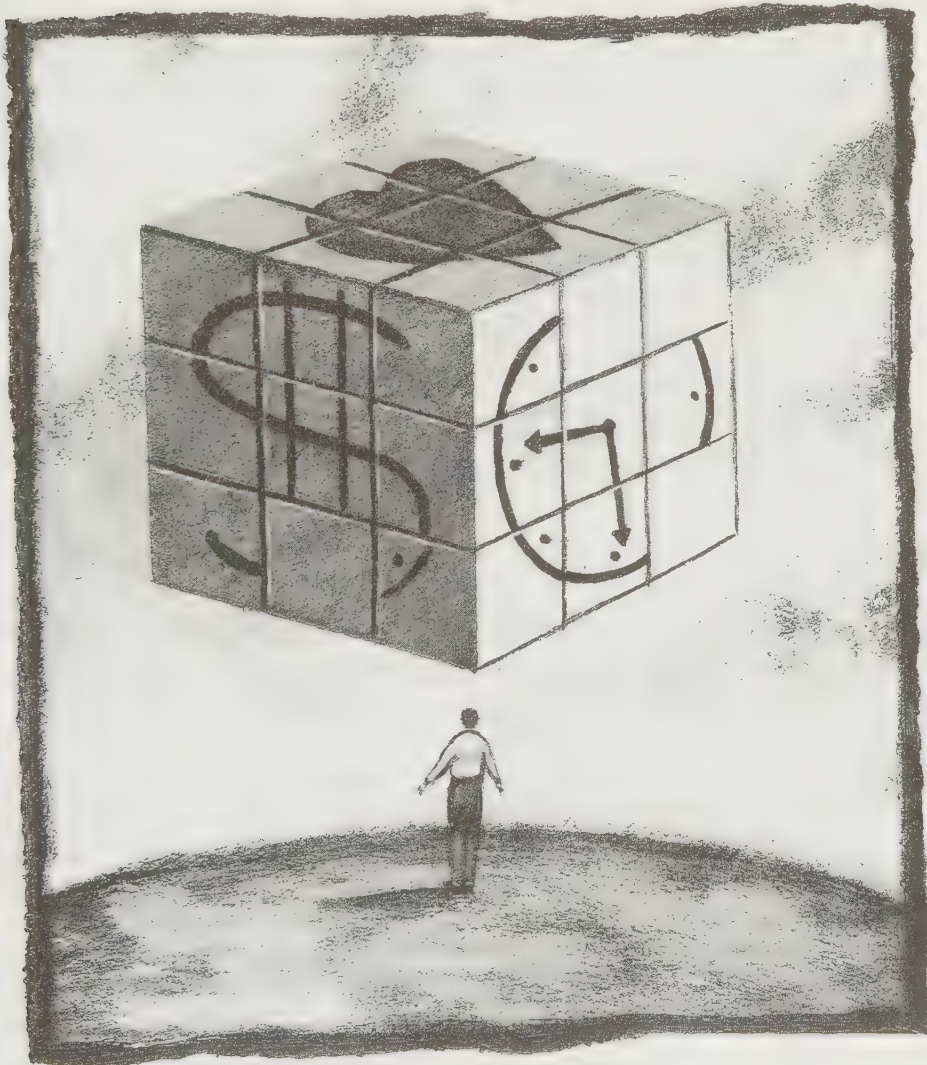
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## INTRODUCTION TO SOLVING PROBLEMS

Consider the following problem:

My best friend is addicted to drugs, but he won't admit it. Jack always liked to drink, but I never thought too

much about it. After all, a lot of people like to drink socially, get relaxed, and have a good time. But over the last few years he's started using other drugs as well as alcohol, and it's ruining his life. He's stopped taking classes at the college and will soon lose his job if he doesn't change. Last week I told him that I was really



*Successful problem-solvers are able to deal effectively with the many problems that they encounter in daily life.*

worried about him, but he told me that he has no drug problem and that in any case it really isn't any of my business. I just don't know what to do. I've known Jack since we were in grammar school together and he's a wonderful person. It's as if he's in the grip of some terrible force and I'm powerless to help him.

In working through this problem, the student who wrote this description will have to think carefully and systematically in order to reach a solution. When we think effectively in situations like this, we usually ask ourselves a series of questions, although we may not be aware of the process that our minds are going through.

1. What is the *problem*?
2. What are the *alternatives*?
3. What are the *advantages* and/or *disadvantages* of each alternative?
4. What is the *solution*?
5. How well is the solution *working*?

Let's explore these questions further—and the thinking process that they represent—by applying them to the problem described here. Put yourself in the position of the student whose friend seems to have a serious drug problem.

### ***What Is the Problem?***

There are a variety of ways to define the problem facing this student. Describe as specifically as possible what *you* think the problem is.

### ***What Are the Alternatives?***

In dealing with this problem, you have a wide variety of possible actions to consider before selecting the best choices. Identify some of the alternatives you might consider.

1. Speak to my friend in a candid and forceful way to convince him that he has a serious problem.
- 2.
- etc.



### *What Are the Advantages and/or Disadvantages of Each Alternative?*

Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each of the problems you identified so you can weigh your choices and decide on the best course of action.

1. Speak to my friend in a candid and forceful way to convince him that he has a serious problem.

*Advantage:* He may respond to my direct emotional appeal, acknowledge that he has a problem, and seek help.

*Disadvantage:* He may react angrily, further alienating me from him and making it more difficult for me to have any influence on him.

- 2.

*Advantage:*

*Disadvantage:*

etc.

### *What Is the Solution?*

After evaluating the various alternatives, select what you think is the most effective alternative for solving the problem and describe the sequence of steps you would take to act on the alternative.

### *How Well Is the Solution Working?*

The final step in the process is to review the solution and decide whether it is working well. If it is not, you must be able to modify your solution or perhaps choose an alternate solution that you had disregarded earlier. Describe what results would inform you that the alternative you had selected to pursue was working well or poorly. If you concluded that your alternative was working poorly, describe what your next action would be.

In this situation, trying to figure out the best way to help your friend recognize his problem and seek treatment leads to a series of decisions. This is what the thinking process is all about—trying to make sense of what is going on in our world and acting appropriately in response. When we solve problems effectively, our thinking process exhibits a coherent organization. It follows the general approach we have just explored.

### PROBLEM-SOLVING METHOD (BASIC)

1. What is the *problem*?
2. What are the *alternatives* available to me?
3. What are the *advantages* and/or *disadvantages* of each alternative?
4. What is the *solution*?
5. How well is the solution *working*?

If we can understand the way our minds operate when we are thinking effectively, then we can apply this understanding to improve our thinking in new, challenging situations. In the remainder of this chapter, we will explore a more sophisticated version of this problem-solving approach and will apply it to a variety of complex, difficult problems.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 3.1 ANALYZING A PROBLEM YOU SOLVED



1. Describe in specific detail an important problem you have solved recently.
2. Explain how you went about solving the problem. What were the steps, strategies, and approaches you used to understand the problem and make an informed decision?
3. Analyze the organization exhibited by your thinking process by completing the five-step problem-solving method we have been exploring.
4. Share your problem with other members of the class and have them try to analyze and solve it. Then explain the solution you arrived at. ◀

### SOLVING COMPLEX PROBLEMS

Imagine yourself in the following situations. What would your next move be, and what are your reasons for it?

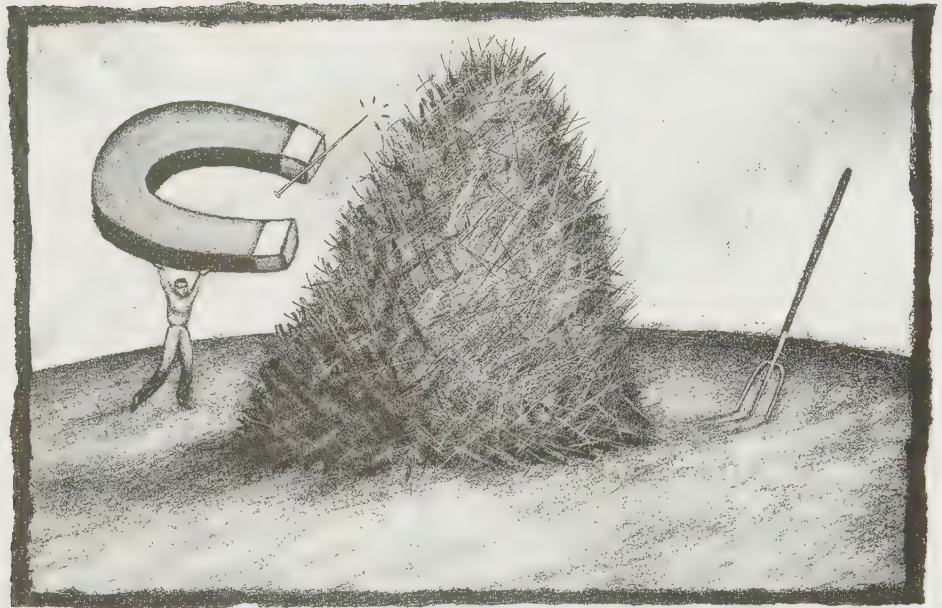
**Procrastination** I am a procrastinator. Whenever I have something important to do, especially if it's difficult or unpleasant, I tend to put it off. Though this chronic delaying bothers me, I try to suppress my concern and instead work on more trivial things. It doesn't matter how much time I allow for certain responsibilities, I always end up waiting until the last minute to really focus and get things done, or I overschedule too many things for the

time available. I usually meet my deadlines, but not always, and I don't enjoy working under this kind of pressure. In many cases I know that I'm not producing my best work. To make matters worse, the feeling that I'm always behind is causing me to feel really stressed out and is undermining my confidence. I've tried every kind of schedule and technique, but my best intentions simply don't last, and I end up slipping into my old habits. I must learn to get my priorities in order and act on them in an organized way so that I can lead a well-balanced and happier life.

**Losing weight** My problem is the unwelcome weight that has attached itself to me. I was always in pretty good physical shape when I was younger, and if I gained a few extra pounds, they were easy to lose if I adjusted my diet slightly or exercised a little more. As I've gotten older, however, it seems easier to add the weight and more difficult to take it off. I'm eating healthier than I ever have before and getting just as much exercise, but the pounds just keep on coming. My clothes are tight, I'm feeling slow and heavy, and my self-esteem is suffering. How can I lost this excess poundage?

**Smoking** One problem in my life that has remained unsolved for about twelve years is my inability to stop smoking. I know it is dangerous for my health, and I tell my children that they should not smoke. They then tell me that I should stop, and I explain to them that it is very hard to do. I have tried to stop many times without success. The only times I previously was able to stop were during my two pregnancies, because I didn't want to endanger my children's health. But after their births, I went back to smoking, although I realize that second-hand smoke can also pose a health hazard. I want to stop smoking because it's dangerous, but I also enjoy it. Why do I continue, knowing it can only damage me and my children?

**Loss of Financial Aid** I'm just about to begin my second year of college, following a very successful first year. To this point, I have financed my education through a combination of savings, financial aid, and a part-time job (sixteen hours per week) at a local store. However, I just received a letter from my college stating that it was reducing my financial aid package by



*Solving complex problems requires us to think critically about the problem, analyzing it with a thoughtful, organized approach.*

half due to budgetary problems. The letter concludes, “We hope this aid reduction will not prove to be too great an inconvenience.” From my perspective, this reduction in aid isn’t an inconvenience—it’s a disaster! My budget last year was already tight, and with my job, I had barely enough time to study, participate in a few college activities, and have a modest (but essential) social life. To make matters worse, my mother has been ill, a condition which has reduced her income and created financial problems at home. I’m feeling panicked! What in the world am I going to do?

When we first approach a difficult problem, it often seems a confused tangle of information, feelings, alternatives, opinions, considerations, and risks. The problem of the college student just described is a complicated situation that does not seem to offer a single simple solution. Let’s imagine ourselves in the student’s predicament. Without the benefit of a systematic approach, our thoughts might wander through the tangle of issues like this:

I want to stay in school . . . but I’m not going to have enough money. . . . I could work more hours at my job . . . but I might not have enough time to



study and get top grades . . . and if all I'm doing is working and studying, what about my social life? . . . and what about mom and the kids? . . . They might need my help. . . . I could drop out of school for a while . . . but if I don't stay in school, what kind of future do I have? . . .

Very often when we are faced with difficult problems like this, we simply do not know where to begin in trying to solve them. Every issue is connected to many others. Frustrated by not knowing where to take the first step, we often give up trying to understand the problem. Instead, we may

1. *Act impulsively* without thought or consideration (e.g., "I'll just quit school").
2. *Do what someone else suggests* without seriously evaluating the suggestion (e.g., "Tell me what I should do—I'm tired of thinking about this").
3. *Do nothing* as we wait for events to make the decision for us (e.g., "I'll just wait and see what happens before doing anything").

None of these approaches is likely to succeed in the long run, and they can gradually reduce our confidence in dealing with complex problems. An alternative to these reactions is to *think critically* about the problem, analyzing it with an organized approach based on the five-step method described earlier.

### PROBLEM-SOLVING METHOD (ADVANCED)

1. **Step 1: What is the problem?**
  - a. What do I know about the situation?
  - b. What results am I aiming for in this situation?
  - c. How can I define the problem?
2. **Step 2: What are the alternatives?**
  - a. What are the boundaries of the problem situation?
  - b. What alternatives are possible within these boundaries?
3. **Step 3: What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of each alternative?**
  - a. What are the advantages of each alternative?
  - b. What are the disadvantages of each alternative?
  - c. What additional information do I need to evaluate each alternative?
4. **Step 4: What is the solution?**
  - a. Which alternative(s) will I pursue?
  - b. What steps can I take to act on the alternative(s) chosen?
5. **Step 5: How well is the solution working?**
  - a. What is my evaluation?
  - b. What adjustments are necessary?

Although we will be using an organized method for working through difficult problems and arriving at thoughtful conclusions, the fact is that our minds do not always work in such a logical, step-by-step fashion. Effective problem-solvers typically pass through all the steps we will be examining, but they don't always do so in the sequence we will be describing. Instead, the best problem-solvers have an integrated and flexible approach to the process in which they deploy a repertoire of problem-solving strategies as needed. Sometimes exploring the various alternatives helps them go back and redefine the original problem; similarly, seeking to implement the solution can often suggest new alternatives.

The key point is that although the problem-solving steps are presented in a logical sequence here, you are not locked into following these steps in a mechanical and unimaginative way. At the same time, in learning a problem-solving method like this it is generally not wise to skip steps, because each step deals with an important aspect of the problem. As you become more proficient in using the method, you will find that you can apply its concepts and strategies to problem-solving in an increasingly flexible and natural fashion, just as learning the basics of an activity like driving a car gradually gives way to a more organic and integrated performance of the skills involved.

Before applying a method like the one just outlined above to your problem, however, you need to first ready yourself by *accepting* the problem.

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## ACCEPTING THE PROBLEM

To solve a problem, you must first be willing to *accept* the problem by *acknowledging* that the problem exists and *committing* yourself to trying to solve it. Sometimes you may have difficulty recognizing there *is* a problem unless it is pointed out to you. Other times you may actively resist acknowledging a problem, even when it is pointed out to you. The person who confidently states, "I don't really have any problems," sometimes has very serious problems—but is simply unwilling to acknowledge them.

On the other hand, mere acknowledgment is not enough to solve a problem. Once you have identified a problem, you must commit yourself to trying to solve it. Successful problem-solvers are highly motivated and willing to persevere through the many challenges and frustrations of the problem-solving process. How do you find the motivation and commitment that prepare you to

enter the problem-solving process? There are no simple answers, but a number of strategies may be useful to you.

1. **List the benefits.** Making a detailed list of the benefits you will derive from successfully dealing with the problem is a good place to begin. Such a process helps you clarify why you might want to tackle the problem, motivates you to get started, and serves as a source of encouragement when you encounter difficulties or lose momentum.
2. **Formalize your acceptance.** When you formalize your acceptance of a problem, you are “going on record,” either by preparing a signed declaration or by signing a “contract” with someone else. This formal commitment serves as an explicit statement of your original intentions that you can refer to if your resolve weakens.
3. **Accept responsibility for your life.** Each one of us has the potential to control the direction of our lives, but to do so we must accept our freedom to choose and the responsibility that goes with it. As you saw in the last chapter, critical thinkers actively work to take charge of their lives rather than letting themselves be passively controlled by external forces.
4. **Create a “worst-case” scenario.** Some problems persist because you are able to ignore their possible implications. When you use this strategy, you remind yourself, as graphically as possible, of the potentially disastrous consequences of your actions. For example, using vivid color photographs and research conclusions, you can remind yourself that excessive smoking, drinking, or eating can lead to myriad health problems and social and psychological difficulties as well as an early and untimely demise.
5. **Identify what’s holding you back.** If you are having difficulty accepting a problem, it is usually because something is holding you back. For example, you might be concerned about the amount of time and effort involved, you might be reluctant to confront the underlying issues that the problem represents, you might be worried about finding out unpleasant things about yourself or others, or you might be inhibited by other problems in your life, such as a tendency to procrastinate. Whatever the constraints, using this strategy involves identifying and describing all of the factors that are preventing you from attacking the problem and then addressing these factors one at a time.

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## STEP 1: WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

The first step in solving problems is to determine exactly what the central issues of the problem are. If you do not clearly understand what the problem really is, then your chances of solving it are considerably reduced. You may spend your time trying to solve the wrong problem. For example, consider the different formulations of the following problems. How might these formulations lead you in different directions in trying to solve the problems?

"School is boring." vs. "I feel bored in school."

"I'm a failure." vs. "I just failed an exam."

In each of these cases, a very general conclusion (left column) has been replaced by a more specific characterization of the problem (right column).

The general conclusions ("I'm a failure") do not suggest productive ways of resolving the difficulties. They are too absolute, too all encompassing. On the other hand, the more specific descriptions of the problem situation ("I just failed an exam") *do* permit us to attack the problem with useful strategies. In short, the way you define a problem determines not only *how* you will go about solving it, but also whether you feel that the problem can be solved at all. Correct identification of a problem is essential if you are going to be able to perform a successful analysis and reach an appropriate conclusion. If you misidentify the problem, you can find yourself pursuing an unproductive and even destructive course of action.

Let us return to the problem of the college finances we encountered on page 97 and analyze it using our problem-solving method. (*Note:* As you work through this problem-solving approach, apply the steps and strategies to an unsolved problem in your own life. You will have an opportunity to write up your analysis when you complete Thinking Activity 3.2 on page 116.) In order to complete the first major step of this problem-solving approach—"What is the problem?"—you need to address three component questions:

1. What do I know about the situation?
2. What results am I aiming for in this situation?
3. How can I define the problem?

### *Step 1A: What Do I Know About the Situation?*

Solving a problem begins with determining what information you *know* to be the case and what information you *think* might be the case. Your need to have a clear idea of the details of your beginning circumstances to explore the problem



successfully. Sometimes a situation may appear to be a problem when it really isn't simply because your information isn't accurate. For example, you might be convinced that someone you are attracted to doesn't reciprocate your interest. If this belief is inaccurate, however, then your "problem" doesn't really exist.

You can identify and organize what you know about the problem situation by using *key questions*. In Chapter 2, we examined six types of questions that can be used to explore situations and issues systematically: *fact*, *interpretation*, *analysis*, *synthesis*, *evaluation*, and *application*. By asking—and trying to answer—questions of fact, you are establishing a sound foundation for the exploration of your problem. Answer the following questions of fact—who, what, where, when, how, why—about the problem described at the beginning of the chapter.

1. *Who* are the people involved in this situation?  
*Who* will benefit from solving this problem?  
*Who* can help me solve this problem?
2. *What* are the various parts or dimensions of the problem?  
*What* are my strengths and resources for solving this problem?  
*What* additional information do I need to solve this problem?
3. *Where* can I find people or additional information to help me solve the problem?
4. *When* did the problem begin?  
*When* should the problem be resolved?
5. *How* did the problem develop or come into being?
6. *Why* is solving this problem important to me?  
*Why* is this problem difficult to solve?
7. *Additional questions:*

### ***Step 1B: What Results Am I Aiming for in This Situation?***

The second part of answering the question "What is the problem?" consists of identifying the specific *results* or objectives you are trying to achieve. The results are those goals that will eliminate the problem if you are able to attain them. Whereas the first part of Step 1 oriented you in terms of the history of the problem and the current situation, this part encourages you to look ahead to the future. In this respect, it is similar to the process of establishing and working toward your goals that you examined in Chapter 1. To identify your results, you need to ask yourself this question: "What are the objectives that, once

achieved, will solve this problem?" For instance, one of the results or objectives in the sample problem might be having enough money to pay for college. Describe additional results you might be trying to achieve in this situation.

### *Step 1C: How Can I Define the Problem?*

After exploring what you know about the problem and the results you are aiming to achieve, you need to conclude Step 1 by defining the problem as clearly and specifically as possible. Defining the problem is a crucial task in the entire problem-solving process because this definition will determine the direction of the analysis. To define the problem, you need to identify its central issue(s). Sometimes defining the problem is relatively straightforward, such as: "Trying to find enough time to exercise." Often, however, identifying the central issue of a problem is a much more complex process. For example, the statement "My problem is relating to other people" suggests a complicated situation with many interacting variables that resists simple definition. In fact, you may only begin to develop a clear idea of the problem as you engage in the process of trying to solve it. You might begin by believing that your problem is, say, not having the *ability* to succeed and end by concluding that the problem is really a *fear* of success. As you will see, the same insights apply to nonpersonal problems as well. For example, the problem of high school dropouts might initially be defined in terms of problems in the school system, whereas later formulations may identify drug use or social pressure as the core of the problem.

Although there are no simple formulas for defining challenging problems, you can pursue several strategies in identifying the central issue most effectively:

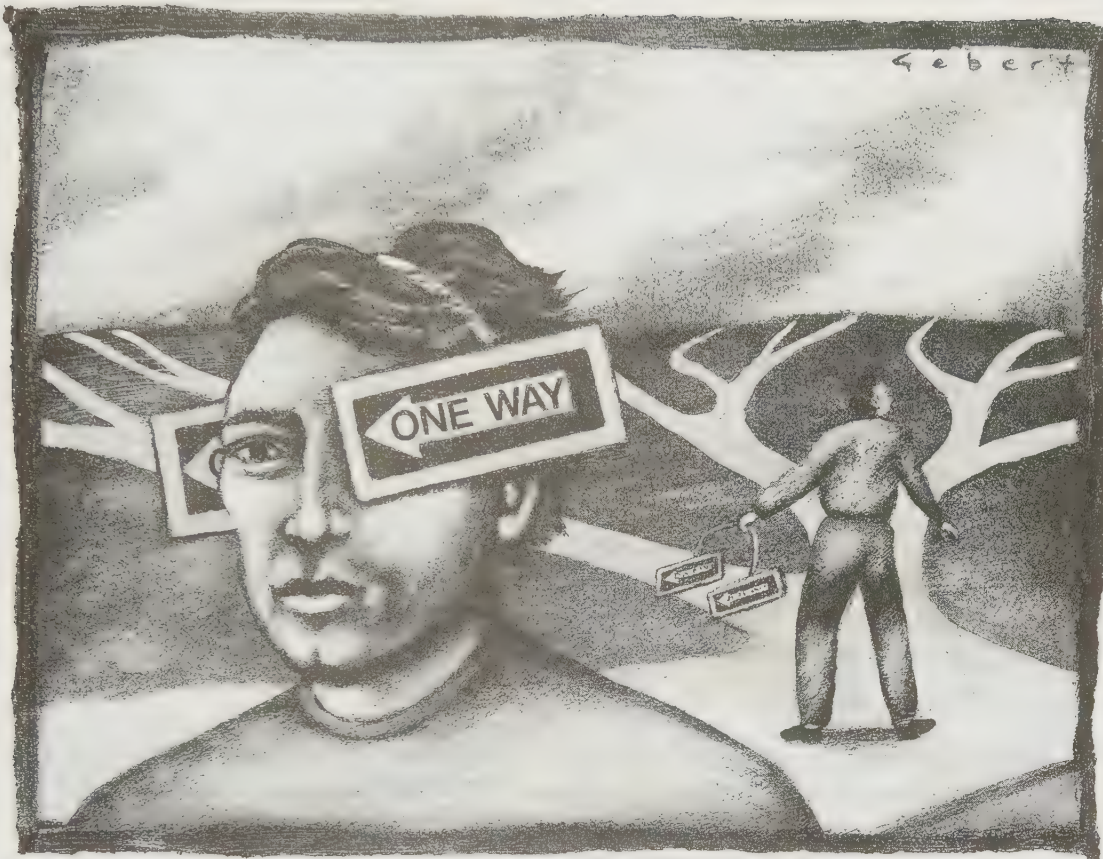
1. ***View the problem from different perspectives.*** As you saw in Chapter 2, perspective-taking is a key ingredient of thinking critically, and it can help you zero in on many problems as well. For example, when you describe how various individuals might view a given problem—such as the high school dropout rate—the essential ingredients of the problem begin to emerge. In the college finances problem, how would you describe the following perspectives?

*Your perspective:*

*The college's perspective:*

*Your mother's perspective:*

2. ***Identify component problems.*** Larger problems are often composed of component problems. To define the larger problem, it is often necessary to iden-



*Viewing a problem from different perspectives helps us define the problem clearly and generate a variety of possible solutions.*

tify and describe the subproblems that comprise it. For example, poor performance at school might be the result of a number of factors, such as ineffective study habits, inefficient time management, and preoccupation with a personal problem. Defining, and dealing effectively with, the larger problem means defining and dealing with the subproblems first. Identify possible subproblems in the sample problem:

*Subproblem a:*

*Subproblem b:*

3. **State the problem clearly and specifically.** A third defining strategy is to state the problem as clearly and specifically as possible, based on an exami-

nation of the results that need to be achieved to solve the problem. This sort of clear and specific description of the problem is an important step in solving it. For if you state the problem in *very general* terms, you won't have a clear idea of how best to proceed in dealing with it. But if you can describe your problem in more *specific terms*, then your description will begin to suggest actions you can take to solve the problem. Examine the differences between the statements of the following problem:

*General:* "My problem is money."

*More specific:* "My problem is budgeting my money so that I won't always run out near the end of the month."

*Most specific:* "My problem is developing the habit and the discipline to budget my money so that I won't always run out near the end of the month."

Review your analysis of the sample problem and then state the problem as clearly and specifically as possible.

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## STEP 2: WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

Once you have identified your problem clearly and specifically, your next move is to examine each of the possible actions that might help you solve the problem. Before you list the alternatives, however, it makes sense to determine first which actions are possible and which are impossible. You can do this by exploring the *boundaries* of the problem situation.

### *Step 2A: What Are the Boundaries of the Problem Situation?*

Boundaries are the limits in the problem situation that you cannot change. They are a part of the problem, and they must be accepted and dealt with. For example, in the sample situation, the fact that a day has only twenty-four hours must be accepted as part of the problem situation. There is no point in developing alternatives that ignore this fact. At the same time, you must be careful not to identify as boundaries circumstances that can actually be changed. For instance, you might assume that your problem must be solved in your current location without realizing that relocating to another, less expensive college is one of your options. Identify additional boundaries that might be a part of the



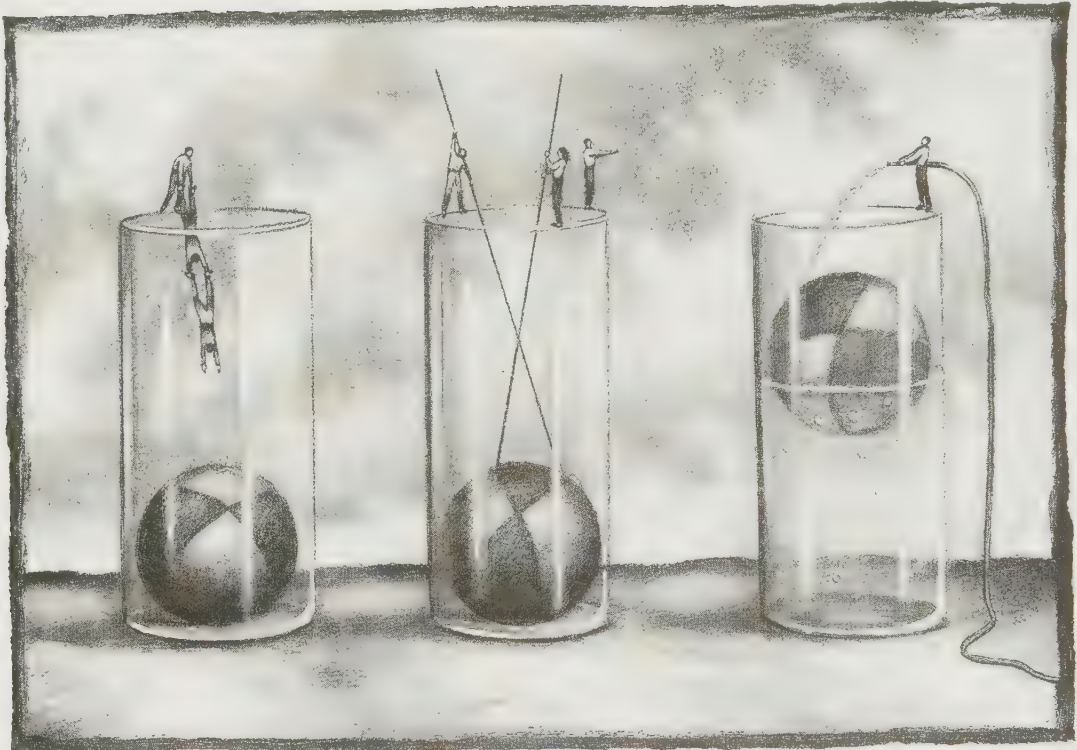
sample situation and some of the questions you would want to answer regarding the boundary. For example:

*Time limitations:* How much time do I need for each of my basic activities—work, school, social life, travel, and sleep? What is the best way to budget this time?

### ***Step 2B: What Alternatives Are Possible Within These Boundaries?***

After you have established a general idea of the boundaries of the problem situation, you can proceed to identify the possible courses of action that can take place within these boundaries. Of course, identifying all the possible alternatives is not always easy; in fact, it may be part of your problem. Often we do not see a way out of a problem because our thinking is set in certain ruts, fixed in certain perspectives. We may be blind to other approaches, either because we reject them before seriously considering them (“That will never work!”) or because they simply do not occur to us. You can use several strategies to overcome these obstacles:

1. ***Discuss the problem with other people.*** Discussing possible alternatives with others uses a number of the aspects of critical thinking you explored in Chapter 2. As you saw then, thinking critically involves being open to seeing situations from different viewpoints and discussing your ideas with others in an organized way. Both of these abilities are important in solving problems. As critical thinkers we live—and solve problems—in a community, not simply by ourselves. Other people can often suggest possible alternatives that we haven’t thought of, in part because they are outside the situation and thus have a more objective perspective, and in part because they naturally view the world differently than we do, based on their past experiences and their personalities. In addition, discussions are often creative experiences that generate ideas the participants would not have come up with on their own. The dynamics of these interactions often lead to products that are greater than the individual “sum” of those involved.
2. ***Brainstorm ideas.*** Brainstorming, a method introduced by Alex Osborn, builds on the strengths of working with other people to generate ideas and solve problems. In a typical brainstorming session, a group of people work together to generate as many ideas as possible in a specific period of time.



*The best approach to solving problems involves generating many different possible alternatives instead of just a few.*

As ideas are produced, they are not judged or evaluated, as this tends to inhibit the free flow of ideas and discourages people from making suggestions. Evaluation is deferred until a later stage. People are encouraged to build on the ideas of others since the most creative ideas are often generated through the constructive interplay of various minds. A useful visual adjunct to brainstorming is creating mind maps, a process described in Chapter 8, "Relating and Organizing."

3. **Change your location.** Your perspective on a problem is often tied into the circumstances in which the problem exists. For example, a problem you may be having in school is tied into your daily experiences and habitual reactions to these experiences. Sometimes what you need is a fresh perspective, getting away from the problem situation so that you can view it with more clarity and in a different light. Using these strategies, as well as your own

reflections, identify as many alternatives to help solve the sample problem that you can think of.

### STEP 3: WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND/OR DISADVANTAGES OF EACH ALTERNATIVE?

Once you have identified the various alternatives, your next step is to *evaluate* them by using the kinds of evaluation questions described in Chapter 2. Each possible course of action has certain advantages in the sense that if you select that alternative, there will be some positive results. At the same time, each of the possible courses of action likely has disadvantages as well in the sense that if you select that alternative, there may be a cost involved or a risk of some negative results. It is important to examine the potential advantages and/or disadvantages in order to determine how helpful each course of action would be in solving the problem.

#### *Step 3A: What Are the Advantages of Each Alternative?*

The alternative you listed in Step 2 for the sample problem ("Attend college part-time") might include the following advantages:

*Alternatives:*

1. Attend college part-time

*Advantages:*

This would remove some of the immediate time and money pressures I am experiencing while still allowing me to prepare for the future. I would have more time to focus on the courses that I am taking and to work additional hours.

Identify the advantages of each of the alternatives that you listed in Step 2. Be sure that your responses are thoughtful and specific.

#### *Step 3B: What Are the Disadvantages of Each Alternative?*

You also need to consider the disadvantages of each alternative. The alternative you listed for the sample problem might include the following disadvantages:

*Alternatives:*

1. Attend college part-time

*Disadvantages:*

It would take me much longer to complete my schooling, thus delaying my progress toward my goals. Also, I might lose motivation and drop out before completing school because the process was taking so long. Being a part-time student might even threaten my eligibility for financial aid.

Now identify the disadvantages of each of the alternatives that you listed. Be sure that your responses are thoughtful and specific.

### ***Step 3C: What Additional Information Do I Need to Evaluate Each Alternative?***

The next part of Step 3 consists of determining what you must know (*information needed*) to best evaluate and compare the alternatives. For each alternative there are questions that must be answered if you are to establish which alternatives make sense and which do not. In addition, you need to figure out where best to get this information (*sources*).

One useful way to identify the information you need is to ask yourself the question “What if I select this alternative?” For instance, one alternative in the sample problem was “attend college part-time.” When you ask yourself the question “What if I attend college part-time?” you are trying to predict what will occur if you select this course of action. To make these predictions, you must answer certain questions and find the information to answer them.

- How long will it take me to complete my schooling?
- How long can I continue in school without losing interest and dropping out?
- Will I threaten my eligibility for financial aid if I become a part-time student?

The information—and the sources for it—that must be located for the first alternative in the sample problem might include the following:

*Alternative:*

1. Attend college part-time

*Information Needed and Sources:*

*Information:* How long will it take me to complete my schooling? How long can I continue in school without losing interest and dropping out? Will I threaten my eligibility for financial aid if I become a part-time student?



*Sources:* Myself, other part-time students, school counselors, the financial aid office.

Identify the information needed and the sources of this information for each of the alternatives that you identified. Be sure that your responses are thoughtful and specific.

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## STEP 4: WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

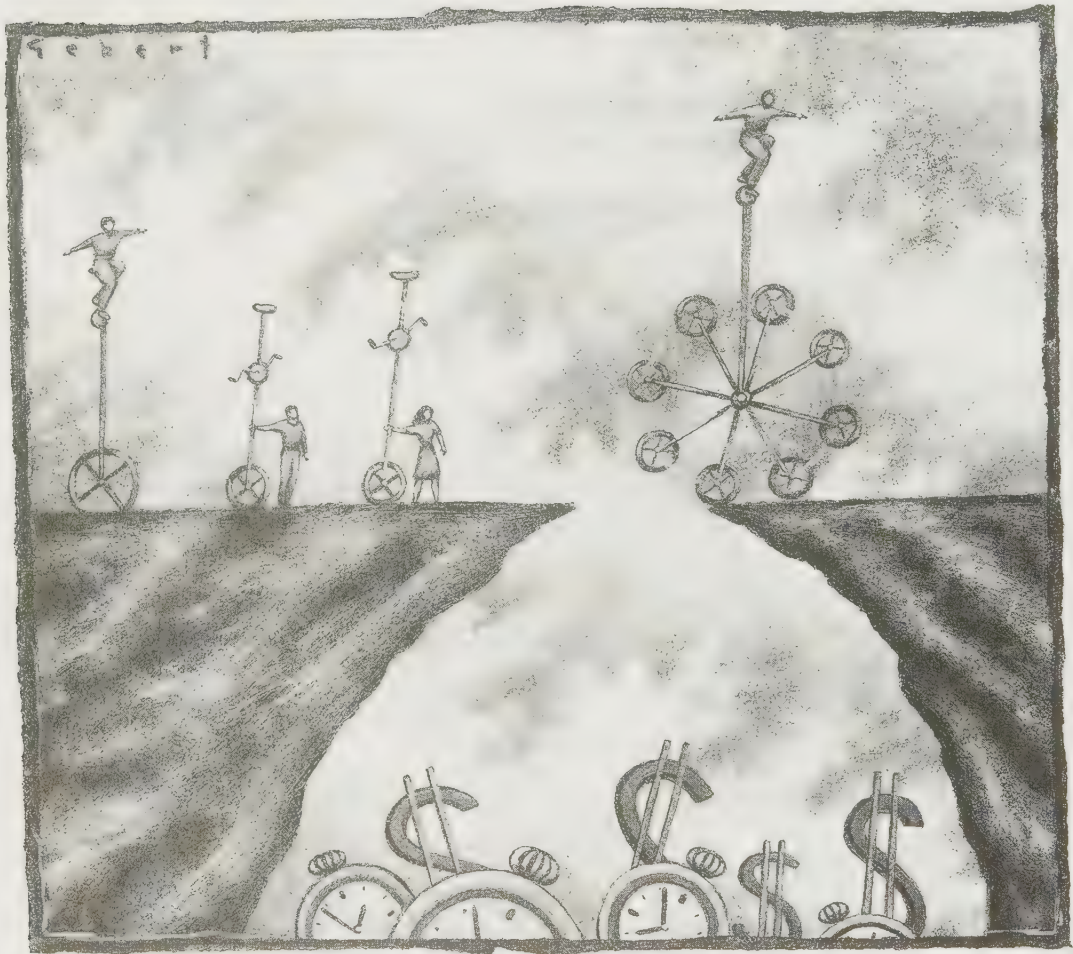
The purpose of Steps 1 through 3 is to analyze your problem in a systematic and detailed fashion—to work through the problem in order to become thoroughly familiar with it and the possible solutions to it. After breaking down the problem in this way, the final step should be to try to put the pieces back together—that is, to decide on a thoughtful course of action based on your increased understanding. Even though this sort of problem analysis does not guarantee finding a specific solution to the problem, it should *deepen your understanding* of exactly what the problem is about. And in locating and evaluating your alternatives, it should give you some very good ideas about the general direction you should move in and the immediate steps you should take.

### *Step 4A: Which Alternative(s) Will I Pursue?*

There is no simple formula or recipe to tell you which alternatives to select. As you work through the different courses of action that are possible, you may find that you can immediately rule some out. For example, in the sample problem you may know with certainty that you do not want to attend college part-time (alternative 1) because you will forfeit your remaining financial aid. However, it may not be so simple to select which of the other alternatives you wish to pursue. How do you decide?

The decisions we make usually depend on what we believe to be most important to us. These beliefs regarding what is most important to us are known as *values*. Our values are the starting points of our actions and strongly influence our decisions. For example, if we value staying alive (as most of us do), then we will make many decisions each day that express this value—eating proper meals, not walking in front of moving traffic, and so on.

Our values help us *set priorities* in life—that is, decide what aspects of our lives are most important to us. We might decide that for the present going to school is more important than having an active social life. In this case, going to school is a higher priority than having an active social life. Unfortunately, our



*Effective problem-solvers develop creative solutions to solve their problems.*

values are not always consistent with each other—we may have to choose *either* to go to school or to have an active social life. Both activities may be important to us; they are simply not compatible with each other. Very often the *conflicts* between our values constitute the problem. Let's examine some strategies for selecting alternatives that might help us solve the problem.

1. *Evaluate and compare alternatives.* Although each alternative may have certain advantages and disadvantages, not all advantages are equally desirable or potentially effective. For example, giving up on college entirely would certainly solve some aspects of the sample problem, but its obvious disad-

vantages would rule out this solution for most people. Thus it makes sense to try to evaluate and rank the various alternatives based on how effective they are likely to be and how they match up with your value system. A good place to begin is the “Results” stage, Step 1B. Examine each of the alternatives and evaluate how well it will contribute to achieving the results you are aiming for in the situation. You may want to rank the alternatives or develop your own rating system to assess their relative effectiveness.

After evaluating the alternatives in terms of their anticipated *effectiveness*, the next step is to evaluate them in terms of their *desirability*, based on your needs, interests, and value system. Again, you can use either a ranking or a rating system to assess their relative desirability. After completing these two separate evaluations, you can then select the alternative(s) that seem most appropriate. Review the alternatives you identified in the sample problem and then rank or rate them according to their potential effectiveness and desirability, assuming this problem was your own.

2. ***Combine alternatives.*** After reviewing and evaluating the alternatives you generated, you may develop a new alternative that combines the best qualities of several options while avoiding the disadvantages some of them would have if chosen exclusively. In the sample problem, you might combine attending college part-time during the academic year with attending school during the summer session so that progress toward your degree won’t be impeded. Examine the alternatives you identified and develop a new option that combines the best elements of several of them.
3. ***Try out each alternative in your imagination.*** Focus on each alternative and try to imagine, as concretely as possible, what it would be like if you actually selected it. Visualize what impact your choice would have on your problem and what the implications would be for your life as a whole. By trying out the alternative in your imagination, you can sometimes avoid unpleasant results or unexpected consequences. As a variation of this strategy, you can sometimes test alternatives on a very limited basis in a practice situation. For example, if you are trying to overcome your fear of speaking in groups, you can practice various speaking techniques with your friends or family until you find an approach you are comfortable with.

After trying out these strategies on the sample problem, select the alternative(s) you think would be most effective and desirable from your standpoint.

*Alternative(s):*



### *Step 4B: What Steps Can I Take to Act on the Alternative(s) Chosen?*

Once you have decided on the correct alternative(s) to pursue, your next move is to plan the steps you will have to take to put it into action. This is the same process of working toward your goals that we explored in Chapter 1. Planning the specific steps you will take is extremely important. Although thinking carefully about your problem is necessary, it is not enough if you hope to solve the problem. You have to *take action*, and planning specific steps is where you begin. In the sample problem, for example, imagine that one of the alternatives you have selected is “Find additional sources of income that will enable me to work part-time and go to school full-time.” The specific steps you would want to take might include the following:

1. Contact the financial aid office at the school to see what other forms of financial aid are available and what you have to do to apply for them.
2. Contact some of the local banks to see what sort of student loans are available.
3. Look for a higher-paying job so that you can earn more money without working additional hours.
4. Discuss the problem with students in similar circumstances in order to generate new ideas.

Identify the steps you would have to take in pursuing the alternative(s) you identified on page XXX.

Of course, plans do not implement themselves. Once you know what actions you have to take, you need to commit yourself to taking the necessary steps. This is where many people stumble in the problem-solving process, paralyzed by inertia or fear. Sometimes, to overcome these blocks and inhibitions, you need to reexamine your original acceptance of the problem, perhaps making use of some of the strategies you explored on pages 100–101. Once you get started, the rewards of actively attacking your problem are often enough incentive to keep you focused and motivated.

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## STEP 5: HOW WELL IS THE SOLUTION WORKING?

As you work toward reaching a reasonable and informed conclusion, you should not fall into the trap of thinking that there is only one “right” decision and that all is lost if you do not figure out what it is and carry it out. You should remind



yourself that any analysis of a problem situation, no matter how careful and systematic, is ultimately limited. You simply cannot anticipate or predict everything that is going to happen in the future. As a result, every decision you make is provisional in the sense that your ongoing experience will inform you if your decisions are working out or if they need to be changed and modified. As you saw in Chapter 2, this is precisely the attitude of the critical thinker—someone who is *receptive* to new ideas and experiences and *flexible* enough to change or modify beliefs based on new information. Critical thinking is not a compulsion to find the “right” answer or make the “correct” decision; it is an ongoing process of exploration and discovery.

### *Step 5A: What Is My Evaluation?*

In many cases the relative effectiveness of your efforts will be apparent. In other cases it will be helpful to pursue a more systematic evaluation along the lines suggested in the following strategies:

1. ***Compare the results with the goals.*** The essence of evaluation is comparing the results of your efforts with the initial goals you were trying to achieve. For example, the goals of the sample problem are embodied in the results you specified on page 104. Compare the anticipated results of the alternative(s) you selected. To what extent will your choice meet these goals? Are there goals that are not likely to be met by your alternative(s)? Which ones? Could they be addressed by other alternatives? Asking these and other questions will help you clarify the success of your efforts and provide a foundation for future decisions.
2. ***Get other perspectives.*** As you have seen throughout the problem-solving process, getting the opinions of others is a productive strategy at virtually every stage, and this is certainly true for evaluation. Other people can often provide perspectives that are both different and more objective than yours. Naturally, the evaluations of others are not always better or more accurate than your own, but even when they are not, reflecting on these different views usually deepens your understanding of the situation. It is not always easy to receive the evaluations of others, but open-mindedness toward outside opinions is a very valuable attitude to cultivate, for it will stimulate and guide you to produce your best efforts.

To receive specific, practical feedback from others, you need to ask specific, practical questions that will elicit this information. General questions (“What do you think of this?”) typically result in overly general, un-

helpful responses (“It sounds okay to me”). Be focused in soliciting feedback, and remember: You do have the right to ask people to be *constructive* in their comments, providing suggestions for improvement rather than flatly expressing what they think is wrong.

### *Step 5B: What Adjustments Are Necessary?*

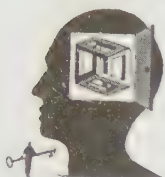
As a result of your review, you may discover that the alternative you selected is not feasible or is not leading to satisfactory results. For example, in the sample problem, you may find that it is impossible to find additional sources of income so that you can work part-time instead of full-time. In that case, you simply have to go back and review the other alternatives to identify another possible course of action. At other times you may find that the alternative you selected is working out fairly well but still requires some adjustments as you continue to work toward your desired outcomes. In fact, this is a typical situation that you should expect to occur. Even when things initially appear to be working reasonably well, an active thinker continues to ask questions such as “What might I have overlooked?” and “How could I have done this differently?” Of course, asking—and trying to answer—questions like these is even more essential if solutions are hard to come by (as they usually are in real-world problems) and if you are to retain the flexibility and optimism you will need to tackle a new option.

## THINKING ACTIVITY 3.2 ANALYZING AN *UNSOLVED PROBLEM*



Select a problem from your own life. It should be one that you are currently grappling with and have not yet been able to solve. After selecting the problem you want to work on, strengthen your *acceptance* of the problem by using one or more of the strategies described on page 101 and describing your efforts. Then analyze your problem using the problem-solving method described in this chapter. Discuss your problem with other class members to generate fresh perspectives and unusual alternatives that might not have occurred to you. Using your own paper, write your analysis in outline style, giving specific responses to the questions in each step of the problem-solving method. Although you might not reach a “guaranteed” solution to your problem, you should deepen your understanding of the problem and develop a concrete plan of action that will help you move in the right direction. Implement your plan of action and then monitor the results. ◀

### THINKING ACTIVITY 3.3 ANALYZING COLLEGE PROBLEMS



Analyze the following problems using the problem-solving approach presented in this chapter.

#### Problem 1: Background Information

The most important unsolved problem that exists for me is my inability to make that crucial decision of what to major in. I want to be secure with respect to both money and happiness when I make a career for myself, and I don't want to make a mistake in choosing a field of study. I want to make this decision before beginning the next semester so that I can start immediately in my career. I've been thinking about managerial studies. However, I often wonder if I have the capacity to make executive decisions when I can't even decide on what I want to do with my life.

#### Problem 2: Background Information

One of my problems is my difficulty in taking tests. It's not that I don't study. What happens is that when I get the test, I become nervous and my mind goes blank. For example, in my social science class, the teacher told the class on Tuesday that there would be a test on Thursday. That afternoon I went home and began studying for the test. By Thursday I knew most of the material, but when the test was handed out, I got nervous and my mind went blank. For a long time I just stared at the test, and I ended up failing it.

#### Problem 3: Background Information

One of the serious problems in my life is learning English as a second language. It is not so easy to learn a second language, especially when you live in an environment where only your native language is spoken. When I came to this country three years ago, I could speak almost no English. I have learned a lot, but my lack of fluency is getting in the way of my studies and my social relationships.

#### Problem 4: Background Information

This is my first year of college, and in general I'm enjoying it a great deal. The one disturbing thing I have encountered is the amount of drinking that students engage in when they socialize. Although I enjoy drinking in moderation, most students drink much more than "in moderation" at parties. They want to "get drunk," "lose control," "get wasted." And the parties aren't just on weekends—they're every night of the week! The problem is that there is a lot of

pressure for me to join in the drinking and partying. Most of the people I enjoy being with are joining in, and I don't want to be left out of the social life of the college. But it's impossible to party so much and still keep up to date with my course work. And all that drinking certainly isn't good for me physically. But on the other hand, I don't want to be excluded from the social life, and when I try to explain that I don't enjoy heavy drinking, my friends make me feel immature and a little silly. What should I do? ◀

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## LOOKING CRITICALLY @ TROUBLESHOOTING ON THE INTERNET



You're in the middle of fine-tuning a very important term paper, fixing the typos and streamlining the text, when poof!—your computer's mouse disappears from view. *Or* a message flashes on the screen telling you that there is insufficient memory to save your document after you have just spent four hours editing it. *Or* your monitor is turning funny colors and displaying flashing, wiggly lines, making it impossible to read. *Or* you're doing research at a major library via the Internet, and your network connection (usually a modem) cuts you off and won't allow you to redial. What do you do?

Don't panic; all is not lost. Help is on the way! And no, you do not have to cart your equipment to a repair store and pay a zillion dollars for someone to peek at the hard drive's insides or tweak some gadget. Depending upon the situation, you may have the solution right at your fingertips. First and most important, *THINK like a problem-solver before you ACT*. Analyze the situation: What exactly is the problem? Which piece of hardware or which software might be causing the difficulty? What are your alternatives for solving the problem? How can you test the various alternatives? If you can find the answers to your problems by yourself, while still at your computer, just think of the time and money you will save and the aggravation you will avoid. You will also be better able to anticipate how to prevent the problem from happening again.

Successful problem-solving—and troubleshooting—always begin with gathering information. Keep your manuals handy and refer to them often. For software questions, check the user's guide that comes with the original package or use the "Help" feature that is often right there on your screen. If your computer is still operable, and you have access to the Internet or an online service, you may be able to find ways to troubleshoot common problems. Many hardware and software manufacturers have established 1-800 help lines or Web sites with customer service departments and FAQ ("Frequently Asked Questions") message boards. Newspapers and magazines that offer computer col-



umns often let you search current and back issues online for articles that may pertain to your dilemma. Sometimes the authors will even answer you via email to help you out of a tough spot. And there are forums, chat groups, live conferences, bulletin or message boards, and newsgroups on the Internet—all being areas where you can correspond or start a round robin of questions and answers to solicit advice from professionals in the field as well as from fellow computer users. Today's newer computers often come with preinstalled "utility" programs that can detect problems and offer solutions through steps that you can handle yourself. Or you can purchase programs that act like computer "doctors" to help diagnose and repair problems. Look for and take advantage of these applications to help solve your puzzles.

What about the vanishing mouse? Sometimes you need to reboot your computer (turn it on and off), particularly when you are shifting between DOS-based and Windows-based programs, to refresh the settings. It's something of a mystery why this method works, but it may be the simplest way to fix an annoying glitch that occurs when mixing old programs with newer versions.

In addition, the customary advice for dealing with all electronic equipment that goes on the blink also applies to computers: *check the plugs!* The myriad of wires hooking up the printer, keyboard, monitor, joystick, mouse, hard drive, fax, and modem can become tangled, undone, or loosened just by feather dusting "back there." So before carting the equipment off to the store, securely fasten all the plugs and cords, turn the computer off, count to ten, and then turn it back on.

No, your computer is not aging gracefully when it tells you it's "Out of Memory." Instead, it could be telling you that it's running too many programs at once, and like people who juggle too many tasks at a time, it just may not be able to handle that many tasks at once. So the short-term "fix" is to shut down some of the applications and see if that helps; the long-range plan would be to see if your PC could be upgraded with more RAM (random access memory) or space on your hard drive. In the meantime, try saving your file to a floppy disk (if the file is small enough), *or*, if you're working in a computer lab, find out whether you can save the file on a different part of the network. And, by the way, the folks who run your computer lab and your fellow students are often great sources for help solving problems. You can also try deleting some unnecessary files or moving them elsewhere to make room for the one you need to keep now. And remember, if you are not already backing up the data you want to keep on a regular basis (also known as making emergency copies, often in a compressed format) learn how—and do it regularly.

Browsing the Internet can be fun, but it can also contribute to your computer's memory problems and cause your modem to cut you off. Those colorful Web pages temporarily load into your computer's upper memory and

take up a lot of space, so you may find yourself being disconnected from your modem and looking at a blank screen on a regular basis. Of course, being “punted” offline can also mean someone in your house has picked up an extension of your phone line and inadvertently cut you off. Maybe the person is trying to tell you that you’re spending too much time online!

Finally, what could be making your monitor freak out? Are you sure you’re using the right “driver” (the software that is used to run extensions like printers, external CD-ROM drives, and scanners)? First things first: check to ensure that the program running your system is the right one (now, where is that manual?). Before you start pricing new video cards (another internal “organ” of your computer), see if any of these possibilities apply: Your monitor might just be getting tired and old and wearing out from use. The circuit that your computer is plugged into might be shared with your refrigerator so that every time the self-defroster goes on, it creates a power blip that surges through your computer. Or perhaps your computer is too close to another current, like a cable TV line. Try moving your computer to another location in your room, plug it into a different socket on a different electrical line, and see if the rainbow effect on your screen happens at specific times or on certain days of the week. If all else fails, hook it up to someone else’s computer and see if it misbehaves there as well. If it is still psychedelic, it may be time for a visit to the computer shop.

Begin looking critically at troubleshooting by engaging in the following activity. Create a problem that you think you might be faced with as you use your computer (or perhaps your professor will hand out sample problems). How would you solve the problem? Think before you act: examine the situation you’ve created and write about both your situation and your solution. First, describe the problem as specifically as possible and identify the resources you can use to solve it. What are your alternatives for solving the problem? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative? What do you think is the best solution? By developing the habit of approaching your computer problems in this way, you’ll soon find yourself naturally anticipating and troubleshooting unexpected difficulties you may encounter—in other words, you’ll be thinking critically about using your computer.

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## SOLVING NONPERSONAL PROBLEMS

The problems we have analyzed up to this point have been “personal” problems in the sense that they represent individual challenges encountered by us as we live our lives. Problems are not only of a personal nature, however. We also face problems as members of a community, a society, and the world. As

with personal problems, we need to approach these kinds of problems in an organized and thoughtful way in order to explore the issues, develop a clear understanding, and decide on an informed plan of action. For example, racism and prejudice directed toward African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Jews, homosexuals, and other minority groups seems to be on the rise at many college campuses. There has been an increase of overt racial incidents at colleges and universities during the past several years, a particularly disturbing situation given the lofty egalitarian ideals of higher education. Experts from different fields have offered a variety of explanations to account for this behavior. Describe why you believe these racial and ethnic incidents are occurring with increasing frequency.

Making sense of a complex, challenging situation like this is not a simple process. Although the problem-solving method we have been using in this chapter is a powerful approach, its successful application depends on having sufficient information about the situation we are trying to solve. As a result, it is often necessary for us to research articles and other sources of information to develop informed opinions about the problem we are investigating.

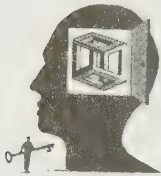
The famous newspaperman H. L. Mencken once said, "To every complex question there is a simple answer—and it's wrong!" We have seen in this chapter that complex problems do not admit simple solutions, whether they concern personal problems in our lives or larger social problems like racial prejudice or world hunger. We have also seen, however, that by working through these complex problems thoughtfully and systematically, we can achieve a deeper understanding of their many interacting elements, as well as develop strategies for solving them.

Becoming an effective problem-solver does not merely involve applying a problem-solving method in a mechanical fashion any more than becoming a mature critical thinker involves mastering a set of thinking skills. Rather, solving problems, like thinking critically, reflects a total approach to making sense of experience. When we think like problem-solvers, we approach the world in a distinctive way. Instead of avoiding difficult problems, we have the courage to meet them head-on and the determination to work through them. Instead of acting impulsively or relying exclusively on the advice of others, we are able to make sense of complex problems in an organized way and develop practical solutions and initiatives.

A sophisticated problem-solver employs all of the critical-thinking abilities that we have examined so far and those we will explore in the chapters ahead. And while we might agree with H. L. Mencken's evaluation of simple answers to complex questions, we might endorse a rephrased version: "To many complex questions there are complex answers—and these are worth pursuing!"

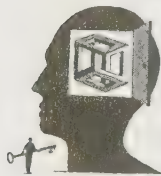


### THINKING ACTIVITY 3.4 ANALYZING SOCIAL PROBLEMS



Identify an important local, national, or international problem that needs to be solved. Locate two or more articles that provide background information and analysis of the problem. Using these articles as a resource, analyze the problem using the problem-solving method developed in this chapter. ◀

### THINKING PASSAGE YOUNG HATE



The final section of this chapter consists of an article dealing with a significant social problem in our lives today. "Young Hate," by David Shenk, examines the problem of intolerance on college campuses. This information provides a foundation from which we can construct a thoughtful analysis of this troubling problem and perhaps develop some productive solutions. After reading the article, identify and analyze the problem being discussed by using the problem-solving method developed in this chapter.

#### YOUNG HATE by David Shenk

*Death to gays.* Here is the relevant sequence of events: On Monday night Jerry Mattioli leads a candlelight vigil for lesbian and gay rights. *Gays are trash.* On Tuesday his name is in the school paper and he can hear whispers and feel more, colder stares than usual. On Wednesday morning a walking bridge in the middle of the Michigan State campus is found to be covered with violent epithets warning campus homosexuals to *be afraid, very afraid*, promising to *abolish faggots from existence*, and including messages specifically directed at Mattioli. Beginning Friday morning fifteen of the perpetrators, all known to Mattioli by name and face, are rounded up and quietly disciplined by the university. *Go home faggots.* On Friday afternoon Mattioli is asked by university officials to leave campus for the weekend, for his own safety. He does, and a few hours later receives a phone call from a friend who tells him that his dormitory room has been torched. MSU's second annual "Cross-Cultural Week" is over.

"Everything was ruined," Mattioli says. "What wasn't burned was ruined by smoke and heat and by the water. On Saturday I sat with the fire investigator all day, and we went through the room, literally ash by ash. . . . The answering machine had melted. The receiver of the telephone on the wall had stretched to about three feet long. That's how intense the heat was."



"Good news!" says Peter Jennings. A recent *Washington Post*/ABC News poll shows that integration is up and racial tension is down in America, as compared with eight years ago. Of course, in any trend there are fluctuations, exceptions. At the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, an estimated two thousand whites chase twenty blacks in a clash after a . . . World Series game, race riots break out in Miami . . . and in Virginia Beach . . .; and on college campuses across the country, our nation's young elite experience an entire decade's aberration from the poll's findings: incidents of ethnic, religious, and gender-related harassment surge throughout the [decade].

Greatest hits include Randy Bowman, a black student at the University of Texas, having to respectfully decline a request by two young men wearing Ronald Reagan masks and wielding a pistol to exit his eighth-floor dorm room through the window; homemade T-shirts, *Thank God for AIDS* and *Aryan by the Grace of God*, among others, worn proudly on campus; Jewish student centers shot at, stoned, and defaced at Memphis State, University of Kansas, Rutgers (*Six million, why not*), and elsewhere; the black chairperson of United Minorities Council at U Penn getting a dose of hi-tech hate via answering machine: *We're going to lynch you, nigger shit. We are going to lynch you.*

The big picture is less graphic, but just as dreadful: reports of campus harassment have increased as much as 400 percent since 1985. Dropout rates for black students in predominantly white colleges are as much as five times higher than white dropout rates at the same schools and black dropout rates at black schools. The Anti-Defamation League reports a six-fold increase in anti-Semitic episodes on campuses between 1985 and 1988. Meanwhile, Howard J. Ehrlich of the National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence reminds us that "up to 80 percent of harassed students don't report the harassment." Clearly, the barrage of news reports reveals only the tip of a thoroughly sour iceberg.

Colleges have responded to incidents of intolerance—and the subsequent demands of minority rights groups—with the mandatory ethnic culture classes and restrictions on verbal harassment. But what price tranquility? Libertarian and conservative student groups, faculty, and political advisors lash out over limitations on free speech and the improper embrace of liberal political agendas. "Progressive academic administrations," writes University of Pennsylvania professor Alan Charles Kors in the *Wall Street Journal*, "are determined to enlighten their morally benighted students and protect the community from political sin."

Kors and kind bristle at the language of compromise being attached to official university policy. The preamble to the University of Michigan's

new policy on discriminatory behavior reads, in part, "Because there is tension between freedom of speech, the right of individuals to be free from injury caused by discrimination, and the University's duty to protect the educational process . . . it may be necessary to have varying standards depending on the locus of regulated conduct." The policy tried to "strike a balance" by applying different sets of restrictions to academic centers, open areas, and living quarters, but in so doing, hit a wall. Before the policy could go into effect, it was struck down in a Michigan court as being too vague. At least a dozen schools in the process of formulating their own policies scurried in retreat as buoyant free-speech advocates went on the offensive. Tufts University president Jean Mayer voluntarily dismissed his school's "Freedom of Speech versus Freedom from Harassment" policy after a particularly inventive demonstration by late-night protesters, who used chalk, tape, and poster board to divide the campus into designated free speech, limited speech, and non-free speech zones. "We're not working for a right to offensive speech," says admitted chalker Andrew Zappia, co-editor of the conservative campus paper, *The Primary Source*. "This is about protecting free speech, in general, and allowing the community to set its own standards about what is appropriate. . . .

"The purpose of the Tufts policy was to prosecute people for what the university described as 'gray area'—meaning unintentional—harassment." Zappia gives a hypothetical example: "I'm a Catholic living in a dorm, and I put up a poster in my room [consistent with my faith] saying that homosexuality is bad. If I have a gay roommate or one who doesn't agree with me, he could have me prosecuted, not because I hung it there to offend him, but because it's gray area harassment. . . . The policy was well intended, but it was dangerously vague. They used words like *stigmatizing*, *offensive*, *harassing*—words that are very difficult to define."

Detroit lawyer Walter B. Connolly, Jr., disagrees. He insists that it's quite proper for schools to act to protect the victims of discrimination as long as the restrictions stay out of the classroom. "Defamation, child pornography, fighting words, inappropriate comments on the radio—there are all sorts of areas where the First Amendment isn't the preeminent burning omnipotence in the sky. . . . Whenever you have competing interests of a federal statute [and] the Constitution, you end up balancing."

If you want to see a liberal who follows this issue flinch, whisper into his or her ear the name Shelby Steele. Liberals don't like Steele, an (African American) English professor at California's San Jose State; they try to dismiss him as having no professional experience in the study of racial discrimination. But he's heavily into the subject, and his analyses

are both lucid and disturbing. Steele doesn't favor restrictions on speech, largely because they don't deal with what he sees as the problem. "You don't gain very much by trying to legislate the problem away, curtailing everyone's rights in the process," he says. In a forum in which almost everyone roars against a shadowy, usually nameless contingent of racist thugs, Steele deviates, choosing instead to accuse the accusers. He blames not the racists, but the weak-kneed liberal administrators and power-hungry victims' advocates for the mess on campuses today.

"Racial tension on campus is the result more of racial equality than inequality," says Steele. "On campuses today, as throughout society, blacks enjoy equality under the law—a profound social advancement. . . . What has emerged in recent years . . . in a sense as a result of progress . . . is a *politics of difference*, a troubling, volatile politics in which each group justifies itself, its sense of worth and its pursuit of power, through difference alone." On nearly every campus, says Steele, groups representing blacks, Hispanics, Asians, gays, women, Jews, and any combinations therein solicit special resources. Asked for—often demanded, in intense demonstrations—are funds for African-American (Hispanic . . . ) cultural centers, separate (face it, segregated) housing, ethnic studies programs, and even individual academic incentives—at Penn State, minority students are given \$275 per semester if they earn a C average, twice that if they do better than 2.75.

These entitlements, however, do not just appear *deus ex machina*. Part two of Steele's thesis addresses what he calls the "capitulation" of campus presidents. To avoid feelings of guilt stemming from past discrimination against minority groups, Steele says, "[campus administrators have] tended to go along with whatever blacks put on the table, rather than work with them to assess their real needs. . . . Administrators would never give white students a theme house where they could be 'more comfortable with people of their own kind,' yet more and more universities are doing this for black students." Steele sees white frustration as the inevitable result.

"White students are not invited to the negotiating table from which they see blacks and others walk away with concessions," he says. "The presumption is that they do not deserve to be there, because they are white. So they can only be defensive, and the less mature among them will be aggressive."

Course, some folks see it another way. The students fighting for minority rights aren't wicked political corruptors, but champions of a cause far too long suppressed by the white male hegemony. Responsive admin-



istrators are engaged not in capitulation, but in progress. And one shouldn't look for the cause of this mess on any campus, because he doesn't live on one. His address used to be the White House, but then he moved to 666 St. Cloud Road. Ronald Reagan, come on down.

*Dr. Manning Marble, University of Colorado:* "The shattering assault against the economic, social, and political status of the black American community as a whole [is symbolized by] the Reagan Administration in the 1980s. The Civil Rights Commission was gutted; affirmative action became a 'dead letter'; social welfare, health care, employment training, and educational loans were all severely reduced. This had a disproportionately more negative impact upon black youth."

The "perception is already widespread that the society at large is more permissive toward discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, and less committed to equal opportunity and affirmative action," concluded a 1988 conference at Northern Illinois University. John Wiener, writing in *The Nation*, attacks long-standing institutions of bigotry, asserting, for example, that "racism is endemic to the fraternity subculture," and praises the efforts of some schools to double the number of minority faculty and increase minority fellowships. On behalf of progressives across the land, Wiener writes off Shelby Steele as someone who is content to "blame the victim."

So the machine has melted, the phone has stretched to where it is useless. This is how intense the heat is. Liberals, who largely control the administration, faculty, and students' rights groups of leading academic institutions, have, with virtually no intensive intellectual debate, inculcated schools with their answers to the problem of bigotry. Conservatives, with a long history of insensitivity to minority concerns, have been all but shut out of the debate, and now want back in. Their intensive pursuit of the true nature of bigotry and the proper response to it—working to assess the "real needs" of campuses rather than simply bowing to pressure—deserves to be embraced by all concerned parties, and probably would have been by now but for two small items: (a) Reagan, their fearless leader, clearly *was* insensitive to ethnic/feminist concerns (even Steele agrees with this); and (b) some of the more coherent conservative pundits *still* show a blatant apathy to the problems of bigotry in this country. This has been sufficient ammunition for liberals who are continually looking for an excuse to keep conservatives out of the dialogue. So now we have clashes rather than debates: on how much one can say, on how much one should have to hear. Two negatives: one side wants to crack down on expression, the other on awareness. The machine has melted, and it's going to take



some consensus to build a new one. Intellectual provincialism will have to end before young hate ever will.

### **A Month in the Life of Campus Bigotry**

*April 1.*

Vandals spray-paint "Jewhatters will pay" and other slogans on the office walls of *The Michigan Daily* (University of Michigan) in response to editorials condemning Israel for policies regarding the Palestinians. Pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian shanties [are] defaced; one is burned.

U of M: Fliers circulated over the weekend announce "White Pride Month."

Southern Connecticut State University reportedly suspends five fraternity officers after racial brawl.

*April 2.*

Several gay men of the University of Connecticut are taunted by two students, who yell "faggot" at them.

*April 3.*

The University of Michigan faculty meet to discuss a proposal to require students to take a course on ethnicity and racism.

*April 4.*

Students at the University of California at Santa Barbara suspend hunger strike after university agrees to negotiate on demands for minority faculty hiring and the changed status of certain required courses.

*April 5.*

The NCAA releases results of survey on black student athletes, reporting that 51 percent of black football and basketball players at predominantly white schools express feelings of being different; 51 percent report feelings of racial isolation; 33 percent report having experienced at least six incidents of individual racial discrimination.

The *New York Times* prints three op-ed pieces by students on the subject of racial tension on campus.

Charges filed against a former student of Penn State for racial harassment of a black woman.

*April 6.*

University of Michigan: Hundreds of law students wear arm bands, boycott classes to protest lack of women and minority professors.

Michigan State University announces broad plan for increasing the number of minority students, faculty, and staff; the appointment of a

senior advisor for minority affairs; and the expansion of multicultural conferences. "It's not our responsibility just to mirror society or respond to mandates," President John DiBiaggio tells reporters, "but to set the tone."

*April 7.*

Wayne State University (Detroit, Michigan) student newspaper runs retraction of cartoon considered offensive following protest earlier in the week.

Controversy develops at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where a white woman charges a popular black basketball player with rape. Player denies charges. Charges are dismissed. Protests of racism and sexual assault commence.

*April 12.*

Twelve-day sit-in begins at Wayne State University (Michigan) over conditions for black students on campus.

*April 14.*

Racial brawl at Arizona State.

*April 20.*

Demonstrations at several universities across the country (Harvard, Duke, Wayne State, Wooster College, Penn State, etc.) for improvements in black student life.

Separate escort service for blacks started at Penn State out of distrust of the regular service.

*April 21.*

200-student sit-in ends at Arizona State University when administrators agree to all thirteen demands.

*April 24.*

Proposed tuition increase at City Universities of New York turns into racial controversy.

*April 25.*

After eighteen months in office, Robert Collin, Florida Atlantic University's first black dean, reveals he has filed a federal discrimination complaint against the school.

Two leaders of Columbia University's Gay and Lesbian Alliance receive death threat[s]. "Dear Jeff, I will kill you butt fucking faggots. Death to COLA!"

*April 26.*

A black Smith College (Massachusetts) student finds note slipped under door, "... African monkey do you want some bananas? Go back to the jungle . . . ."

"I don't think we should have to constantly relive our ancestors' mistakes," a white student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro tells a reporter. "I didn't oppress anybody. Blacks are now equal. You don't see any racial problems anymore."

White Student Union is reported to have been formed at Temple University in Philadelphia, "City of Brotherly Love."

*April 28.*

Note found in Brown University (Rhode Island) dorm. "Once upon a time, Brown was a place where a white man could go to class without having to look at little black faces, or little yellow faces or little brown faces, except when he went to take his meals. Things have been going downhill since the kitchen help moved into the classroom. Keep white supremacy [sic] alive!!! Join the Brown chapter of the KKK today." Note is part of series that began in the middle of the month with "Die Homos." University officials beef up security, hold forum.

*April 29.*

Controversy reported over proposed ban on verbal harassment at Arizona State.

*April 30.*

Anti-apartheid shanty at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, is defaced. Signs read "Apartheid now," and "Trump Plaza."

University of California at Berkeley: Resolution is passed requiring an ethnic studies course for all students.

University of Connecticut: Code is revised to provide specific penalties for acts of racial intolerance. ■

# CHAPTER

# 4

## PERCEIVING





THINKING IS THE WAY you make sense of the world. By thinking in an active, purposeful, and organized way, you are able to solve problems, work toward your goals, analyze issues, and make decisions. Your experience of the world comes to you by means of your *senses*: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. These senses are your bridges to the world, making you aware of what occurs outside you, and the process of becoming aware of your world through your senses is known as *perceiving*.

In this chapter you will explore the way your perceiving process operates and how it relates to your ability to think effectively. In particular, you will discover the way you shape your personal experience by actively selecting, organizing, and interpreting the sensations provided by the senses. In a way, each of us views the world through a pair of individual “eyeglasses” or “contact lenses” that reflect our past experiences and unique personalities. As a critical thinker, you want to become aware of the nature of your own “lenses” to help eliminate any bias or distortion they may be causing. You also want to become aware of the “lenses” of others so that you can better understand why they view things the way they do.

At almost every waking moment of your life, your senses are being bombarded by a tremendous number of stimuli: images to see, noises to hear, odors to smell, textures to feel, and flavors to taste. The experience of all these sensations happening at once creates what the nineteenth-century American philosopher William James called “a bloomin’ buzzin’ confusion.” Yet for us, the world usually seems much more orderly and understandable. Why is this so?

In the first place, your sense equipment can receive sensations only within certain limited ranges. For example, there are many sounds and smells that animals can detect but you cannot because their sense organs have broader ranges in these areas than yours do.

A second reason you can handle this sensory bombardment is that from the stimulation available, you *select* only a small amount on which to focus your attention. To demonstrate this, try the following exercise. Concentrate on what you can *see*, ignoring your other senses for the moment. Focus on sensations that you were not previously aware of and then answer the first question. Concentrate on each of your other senses in turn, following the same procedure.

1. What can you *see*? (For example, the shape of the letters on the page, the design of the clothing on your arm).
2. What can you *hear*? (For example, the hum of the air circulator, the rustling of a page).
3. What can you *feel*? (For example, the pressure of the clothes against your skin, the texture of the page on your fingers).

4. What can you *smell*? (For example, the perfume or cologne someone is wearing, the odor of stale cigarette smoke).
5. What can you *taste*? (For example, the aftereffects of your last meal).

Compare your responses with those of the other students in the class. Do your classmates perceive sensations that differ from the ones you perceived? If so, how do you explain these differences?

By practicing this simple exercise, it should be clear that for every sensation that you focus your attention on there are countless other sensations that you are simply ignoring. If you were aware of *everything* that is happening at every moment, you would be completely overwhelmed. By selecting certain sensations, you are able to make sense of your world in a relatively orderly way. The activity of using your senses to experience and make sense of your world is known as *perceiving*.

<b>Perceiving</b> Actively selecting, organizing, and interpreting what is experienced by your senses
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## ACTIVELY SELECTING, ORGANIZING, AND INTERPRETING SENSATIONS

It is tempting to think that your senses simply record what is happening out in the world as if you were a human camera or tape recorder. You are not, however, a passive receiver of information, a “container” into which sense experience is poured. Instead, you are an *active participant* who is always trying to understand the sensations you are encountering. As you perceive your world, your experience is the result of combining the sensations you are having with the way you understand these sensations. For example, examine the following collection of markings. What do you see?



If all you see is a collection of black spots, try looking at the group sideways. After a while, you will probably perceive a familiar animal.

From this example you can see that when you perceive the world, you are doing more than simply recording what your senses experience. Besides experiencing sensations, you are also *actively making sense* of these sensations. That is why this collection of black spots suddenly became the figure of an animal—because you were able actively to organize these spots into a pattern you recognized. Or think about the times you were able to look up at the white, billowy clouds in the sky and see different figures and designs. The figures you were perceiving were not actually in the clouds but were the result of your giving a meaningful form to the shapes and colors you were experiencing.

The same is true for virtually everything you experience. Your perception of the world results from combining the information provided by your senses with the way you actively make sense of this information. And since making sense of information is what you are doing when you are thinking, you can see that perceiving your world involves using your mind in an active way. Of course, you are usually not aware that you are using your mind to interpret the sensations you are experiencing. You simply see the animal or the figures in the clouds as if they were really there.

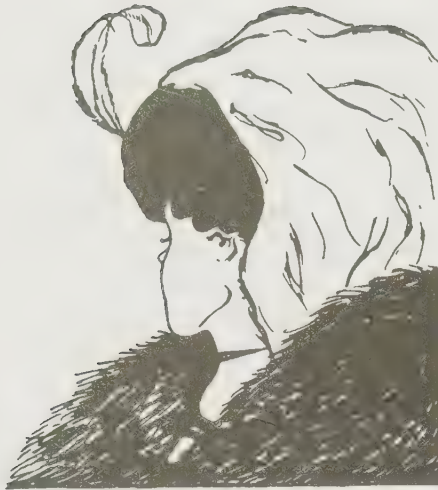
When you actively perceive the sensations you are experiencing, you are usually engaged in three distinct activities:

1. *Selecting* certain sensations to pay attention to
2. *Organizing* these sensations into a design or pattern
3. *Interpreting* what this design or pattern means to you

In the case of the figure on page 132, you were able to perceive an animal because you *selected* certain of the markings to concentrate on, *organized* these markings into a pattern, and *interpreted* this pattern as representing a familiar animal.

Of course, when you perceive, these three operations of selecting, organizing, and interpreting are usually performed quickly, automatically, and often simultaneously. Also, you are normally unaware that you are performing these operations because they are so rapid and automatic. This chapter is designed to help you slow down this normally automatic process of perceiving so that you can understand how the process works.

Let's explore more examples that illustrate how you actively select, organize, and interpret your perceptions of the world. Carefully examine the figure on page 134.



Do you see both the young woman and the old woman? If you do, try switching back and forth between the two images. As you switch back and forth, notice how for each image you are:

- *Selecting* certain lines, shapes, and shadings on which to focus your attention
- *Organizing* these lines, shapes, and shadings into different patterns
- *Interpreting* these patterns as representing things that you are able to recognize—a hat, a nose, a chin

Another way for you to become aware of your active participation in perceiving your world is to consider how you see objects. Examine the illustration that follows. Do you perceive different-sized people or the same-sized people at different distances?





When you see someone who is far away, you usually do not perceive a tiny person. Instead, you perceive a normal-sized person who is far away from you. Your experience in the world has enabled you to discover that the farther things are from you, the smaller they look. The moon in the night sky appears about the size of a quarter, yet you perceive it as being considerably larger. As you look down a long stretch of railroad tracks or gaze up at a tall building, the boundary lines seem to come together. Even though these images are what your eyes “see,” however, you do not usually perceive the tracks meeting or the building coming to a point. Instead, your mind actively organizes and interprets a world composed of constant shapes and sizes, even though the images you actually see usually vary, depending on how far you are from them and the angle from which you are looking at them.

Examine carefully the engraving pictured on page 136 entitled “Satire on False Perspective,” completed by William Hogarth in 1754. In this engraving, the artist has changed many of the clues you use to perceive a world of constant shapes and sizes, thus creating some unusual effects. By analyzing how the artist has created these unusual perspectives, you gain insight into the way your mind actively takes fragmentary information and transforms it into the predictable, three-dimensional world that is so familiar to you.

So far, we have been exploring how your mind actively participates in the way you perceive the world. By combining the sensations you are receiving with the way your mind selects, organizes, and interprets these sensations, you perceive a world of things that is stable and familiar, a world that usually makes sense to you.

The process of perceiving takes place at a variety of different levels. At the most basic level, the concept of “perceiving” refers to the selection, organization, and interpretation of sensations: for example, being able to perceive the various objects in your experience, like a basketball. However, you also perceive larger patterns of meaning at more complex levels, as in watching the action of a group of people engaged in a basketball game. Although these are very different contexts, both engage you in the process of actively selecting, organizing, and interpreting what is experienced by your senses—in other words, “perceiving.”

### *People's Perceptions Differ*

Your *active* participation in perceiving your world is something you are not usually aware of. You normally assume that what you are perceiving is what is actually taking place. Only when you find that your perception of the same event differs from the perceptions of others are you forced to examine the



*It is good to know  
 However makes a design, without the knowledge of perspective,  
 It is much, however as are shown in the frontispiece*

All rights reserved. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gift of Sarah Lazarus, 1891.  
 (91.1.33)

manner in which you are selecting, organizing, and interpreting the events in your world. For example, consider the contrasting perceptions of the various characters in the cartoon on page 137. How do you think each individual arrived at his or her (or its) perception?

### THINKING ACTIVITY 4.1 ANALYZING PERCEPTIONS



Carefully examine the picture of the boy sitting at the desk on page 138. What do you think is happening in this picture?

1. Describe as specifically as possible what you perceive is taking place in the picture.
2. Describe what you think will happen next.

## THE INVESTIGATION



© John Jonik. Reproduced with permission. This cartoon first appeared in *Psychology Today*, February 1984.

3. Identify the details of the picture that led you to your perceptions.
4. Compare your perceptions with the perceptions of other students in the class.  
List several perceptions that differ from yours. ◀

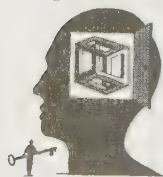
In most cases, people in a group will have a variety of perceptions about what is taking place in the picture in Thinking Activity 4.1. Some will see the boy as frustrated because the work is too difficult. Others will see him concentrating on what has to be done. Still others may see him as annoyed because he is being forced to do something he does not want to do. In each case, the perception depends on how the person is actively using his or her mind to organize and



interpret what is taking place. Since the situation pictured is by its nature somewhat puzzling, different people perceive it in different ways.

Thinking Activity 4.2 reveals another example of how people's perceptions can differ.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 4.2 *ANALYZING PERCEPTIONS*



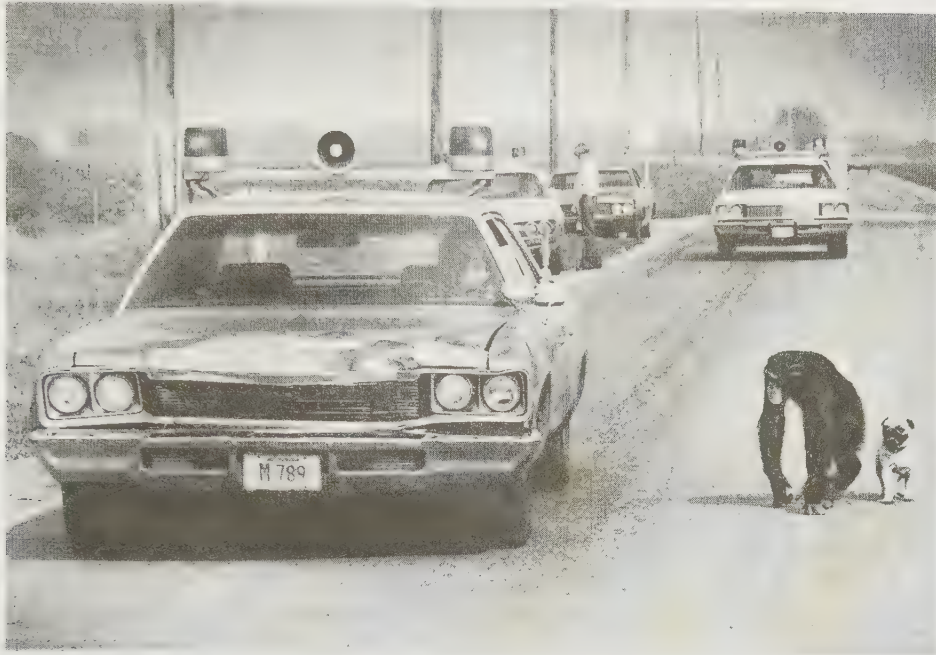
Closely examine the photograph on page 139.

1. Describe as specifically as possible what you think is taking place in the photograph.
2. Now describe what you think will happen next.
3. Identify the details of the picture that led you to your perceptions.
4. Compare your perceptions with the perceptions of other students in the class. List several perceptions that differ from yours. ◀

### *Viewing the World Through "Lenses"*

To understand how various people can be exposed to the same stimuli or events and yet have different perceptions, it helps to imagine that each of us views the

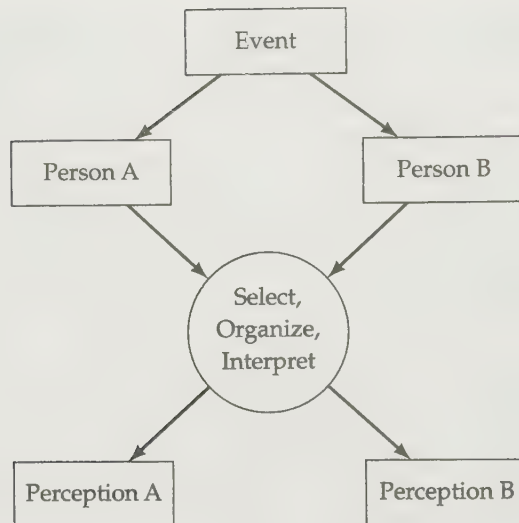




world through our own pair of “contact lenses.” Of course, we are not usually aware of the lenses we are wearing. Instead, our lenses act as *filters* that select and shape what we perceive without our realizing it.

This image of “lenses” helps explain why people can be exposed to the same stimuli or events and yet perceive different things. This happens because people are wearing *different lenses*, which influence what they are perceiving. For example, in “The Investigation” on page 137, each witness is giving what he or she (or it!) believes is an accurate description of the man in the center, unaware that their descriptions are being influenced by who they are and the way that they see things. When members of your class had different perceptions of the boy at the desk in Thinking Activity 4.1 and of the photograph in Thinking Activity 4.2, their different perceptions were the result of the different lenses through which each views the world.

To understand the way people perceive the world, you have to understand their individual lenses, which influence how they actively select, organize, and interpret the events in their experience. A diagram of the process might look like this:



Consider the following pairs of statements. In each of these cases, both people are being exposed to the same basic *stimulus* or event, yet each has a totally different *perception* of the experience. Explain how you think the various perceptions might have developed.

1. a. That chili was much too spicy to eat.  
*Explanation:*
  - b. That chili needed more hot peppers and chili powder to spice it up a little.  
*Explanation:*
2. a. People who wear lots of makeup and jewelry are very sophisticated.  
*Explanation:*
  - b. People who wear lots of makeup and jewelry are overdressed.  
*Explanation:*
3. a. The music that young people enjoy listening to is a very creative cultural expression.  
*Explanation:*
  - b. The music that young people enjoy listening to is obnoxious noise.  
*Explanation:*

To become an effective critical thinker, you have to become aware of the lenses that you—and others—are wearing. These lenses aid you in actively selecting, organizing, and interpreting the sensations in your experience. If you are unaware of the nature of your own lenses, you can often mistake your own per-

ceptions for objective truth without bothering to examine either the facts or others' perceptions on a given issue.

## *Selecting Perceptions*

We spend much of the time experiencing the world in a very general way, unaware of many of the details of the events that are taking place. For example, try to draw a picture of the face of a push-button phone, complete with numbers and letters. Then compare your drawing with an actual phone. Did you have any difficulty? Why? We also tend to select perceptions about subjects that have been called to our attention for some reason. For instance, at the age of three, my daughter suddenly became aware of beards. Upon entering a subway car, she would ask in a penetrating voice, "Any beards here?" and then would proceed to count them out loud. In doing this, she naturally focused my attention—as well as the attention of many of the other passengers—on beards.

As another aspect of our "perceiving" lenses, we tend to notice what we need, desire, or find of interest. When we go shopping, we focus on the items we are looking for. Walking down the street, we tend to notice certain kinds of people or events while completely ignoring others. Even while watching a movie or reading a book, we tend to concentrate on and remember the elements we find of interest. Another person can perform *exactly* the same actions—shop at the same store, walk down the same street with you, read the same book, or go to the same movie—and yet see and remember entirely different things. In other words, what you see and do not see depends largely on your interests, needs, and desires.

The way you are feeling—your mood or emotional state—can also affect the perceptions you select. For example, think back on the times when you have felt cranky, perhaps because you did not get enough sleep or were under pressure, and recall how you behaved. When we are in bad moods, we often seem ready to focus our attention on every potential insult or criticism made by others—and are ready to respond the same way.

Although we tend to focus on what is familiar to us, we are normally not aware that we are doing so. In fact, we often take for granted what is familiar to us—the taste of chili or eggs, the street that we live on, our family or friends—and normally do not think about our perception of it. But when something happens that makes the familiar seem strange and unfamiliar, we become aware of our perceptions and start to evaluate them.

To sum up, you actively select your perceptions based on what has been called to your attention, your needs or interests, your mood or feelings, and

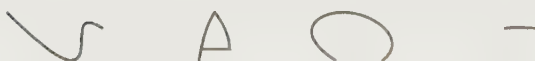
what seems familiar or unfamiliar. The way you select your perceptions is an important factor in shaping the lenses through which you view the world.

### *Organizing Perceptions*

Not only do you actively *select* certain perceptions, you also actively *organize* these perceptions into meaningful relationships and patterns. Consider the following series of lines:



Did you perceive them as individual lines or did you group them into pairs? We seem naturally to try to organize our perceptions to create order and meaning. Consider the items pictured next and try to organize them into a pattern that is familiar to you:



As you perceive the world, you naturally try to order and organize what you are experiencing into patterns and relationships that make sense to you. And when you are able to do so, the completed whole means more to you than the sum of the individual parts. You are continually organizing your world in this way at virtually every waking moment.

We do not live in a world of isolated sounds, patches of color, random odors, and individual textures. Instead, we live in a world of objects and people, language and music—a world in which all these individual stimuli are woven together. We are able to perceive this world of complex experiences because we are able to organize the individual stimuli we are receiving into relationships that have meaning for us.



The way you organize your experience is an important part of the lenses through which you perceive the world. You are able to perceive objects, human expressions, and potential human action because of your ability to organize the lines, shapes, and shadings into meaningful patterns and complex relationships.

## *Interpreting Perceptions*

Besides selecting and organizing your perceptions, you also actively *interpret* what you perceive. When you interpret, you are figuring out what something means. One of the elements that influences your interpretations of what you are perceiving is the *context*, or overall situation, within which the perception is occurring. For example, imagine that you see a man running down the street. Your interpretation of his action will depend on the specific context. For example, is there a bus waiting at the corner? Is a police officer running behind him? Is he wearing a jogging suit?

You are continually trying to interpret what you perceive, whether it is a design, someone's behavior, or a social situation. Like the example of someone running down the street, many of the perceptions you experience can be interpreted in more than one way. When a situation has more than one possible interpretation, you say that it is *ambiguous*. The more ambiguous a situation is, the greater the number of possible meanings or interpretations it has.

Think again about the pictures you examined in Thinking Activities 4.1 and 4.2. In each instance, your description of what was happening—and what was about to happen—was based on your interpretation of the situation. Other members of the class may have given different descriptions of what was occurring because they interpreted the situation differently. Since these two pictures are by their nature puzzling and ambiguous, no one interpretation is necessarily more correct than another. Instead, each interpretation simply reveals the lenses through which this person views the world. Of course, you may feel that some interpretations make more sense than others, based on the details and the relationships that you perceive in the situation.

Your perceptions reveal the lenses through which you are viewing the event. Watching your team play baseball, for example, you may really believe that the opposing runner was “out by a mile”—even though the replay may show otherwise. Or imagine that you are giving a speech to the class and that you are being evaluated by two people—someone who likes you and someone who does not. Do you believe that different perceptions of your performance may result?

Similarly, the way you are feeling can influence your interpretations of what you are experiencing. When you feel happy and optimistic, the world often seems friendly and the future full of possibilities, and you interpret the problems you encounter as challenges to be overcome. On the other hand, when you are depressed or unhappy, you may perceive your world entirely differently. The future can appear full of problems that are trying to overwhelm you. In both cases the outer circumstances may be very similar; it is your own interpretation of the world through your lenses that varies so completely.

Your perceptions of the world are dramatically influenced by your past experiences: the way you were brought up, the relationships you have had, and the training and education you have undergone. Take the case of two people who are watching a football game. One person, who has very little understanding of football, sees merely a bunch of grown men hitting each other for no apparent reason. The other person, who loves football, sees complex play patterns, daring coaching strategies, effective blocking and tackling techniques, and zone defenses with “seams” that the receivers are trying to “split.” Both have their eyes focused on the same event, but they are perceiving two entirely different situations. Their perceptions differ because each person is actively selecting, organizing, and interpreting the available stimuli in different ways. The same is true of any situation in which you are perceiving something about which you have special knowledge or expertise. The following are examples:

- A builder examining the construction of a new house
- A music lover attending a concert
- A naturalist experiencing the outdoors
- A cook tasting a dish just prepared
- A lawyer examining a contract
- An art lover visiting a museum

Think about a special area of interest or expertise that you have and how your perceptions of that area differ from those who don't share your knowledge. Ask other class members about their areas of expertise. Notice how their perceptions of that area differ from your own because of their greater knowledge and experience.

In all these cases, the perceptions of the knowledgeable person differ substantially from the perceptions of a person who lacks knowledge of that area. Of course, you do not have to be an expert to have more fully developed perceptions. It is a matter of degree. In general, the more understanding you have of a particular area, the more detailed and complete your perceptions can be of all matters related to it.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 4.3 *ANALYZING DIFFERENT ACCOUNTS OF THE ASSASSINATION OF MALCOLM X*



Let's examine a situation in which a number of different people had somewhat different perceptions about an event they were describing. The first chapter of this book contains a passage by Malcolm X (page 11) written when he was just beginning his life's work. A few years later, this work came to a tragic end with his assassination at a meeting in Harlem. The following are five different accounts of what took place on that day. As you read through the various accounts, pay particular attention to the different perceptions each one presents of this event. After you have finished reading the accounts, analyze some of the differences in these perceptions by answering the questions that follow.

#### FIVE ACCOUNTS OF THE ASSASSINATION OF MALCOLM X

##### *The New York Times* (February 22, 1965)

Malcolm X, the 39-year-old leader of a militant Black Nationalist movement, was shot to death yesterday afternoon at a rally of his followers in a ballroom in Washington Heights. The bearded Negro extremist had said only a few words of greeting when a fusillade rang out. The bullets knocked him over backwards.

A 22-year-old Negro, Thomas Hagan, was charged with the killing. The police rescued him from the ballroom crowd after he had been shot and beaten.

Pandemonium broke out among the 400 Negroes in the Audubon Ballroom at 160th Street and Broadway. As men, women and children ducked under tables and flattened themselves on the floor, more shots were fired. The police said seven bullets struck Malcolm. Three other Negroes were shot. Witnesses reported that as many as 30 shots had been fired. About two hours later the police said the shooting had apparently been a result of a feud between followers of Malcolm and members of the extremist group he broke with last year, the Black Muslims. . . .

##### *Life* (March 5, 1965)

His life oozing out through a half dozen or more gunshot wounds in his chest, Malcolm X, once the shrillest voice of black supremacy, lay dying on the stage of a Manhattan auditorium. Moments before, he had stepped up to the lectern and 400 of the faithful had settled down expectantly to hear the sort of speech for which he was famous—flaying the hated white man. Then a scuffle broke out in the hall and Malcolm's bodyguards bolted from his side to break it up—only to discover that they had been faked

out. At least two men with pistols rose from the audience and pumped bullets into the speaker, while a third cut loose at close range with both barrels of a sawed-off shotgun. In the confusion the pistol man got away. The shotgunner lunged through the crowd and out the door, but not before the guards came to their wits and shot him in the leg. Outside he was swiftly overtaken by other supporters of Malcolm and very likely would have been stomped to death if the police hadn't saved him. Most shocking of all to the residents of Harlem was the fact that Malcolm had been killed not by "whitey" but by members of his own race.

### ***The New York Post* (February 22, 1965)**

They came early to the Audubon Ballroom, perhaps drawn by the expectation that Malcolm X would name the men who firebombed his home last Sunday. . . . I sat at the left in the 12th row and, as we waited, the man next to me spoke of Malcolm and his followers: "Malcolm is our only hope. You can depend on him to tell it like it is and to give Whitey hell." . . .

There was a prolonged ovation as Malcolm walked to the rostrum. Malcolm looked up and said, "A salaam aleikum (Peace be unto you)," and the audience replied, "We aleikum salaam (And unto you, peace)."

Besppectacled and dapper in a dark suit, sandy hair glinting in the light, Malcolm said: "Brothers and sisters . . ." He was interrupted by two men in the center of the ballroom, who rose and, arguing with each other, moved forward. Then there was a scuffle at the back of the room. I heard Malcolm X say his last words: "Now, brothers, break it up," he said softly. "Be cool, be calm."

Then all hell broke loose. There was a muffled sound of shots and Malcolm, blood on his face and chest, fell limply back over the chairs behind him. The two men who had approached him ran to the exit on my side of the room, shooting wildly behind them as they ran. I heard people screaming, "Don't let them kill him." "Kill those bastards." At an exit I saw some of Malcolm's men beating with all their strength on two men. I saw a half dozen of Malcolm's followers bending over his inert body on the stage. Their clothes were stained with their leader's blood.

Four policemen took the stretcher and carried Malcolm through the crowd and some of the women came out of their shock and one said: "I hope he doesn't die, but I don't think he's going to make it."

### ***Associated Press* (February 22, 1965)**

A week after being bombed out of his Queens home, Black Nationalist leader Malcolm X was shot to death shortly after 3 (P.M.) yesterday at a Washington Heights rally of 400 of his devoted followers. Early today,



police brass ordered a homicide charge placed against a 22-year-old man they rescued from a savage beating by Malcolm X supporters after the shooting. The suspect, Thomas Hagan, had been shot in the left leg by one of Malcolm's bodyguards as, police said, Hagan and another assassin fled when pandemonium erupted. Two other men were wounded in the wild burst of firing from at least three weapons. The firearms were a .38, a .45 automatic and a sawed-off shotgun. Hagan allegedly shot Malcolm X with the shotgun, a double-barrelled sawed-off weapon on which the stock also had been shortened, possibly to facilitate concealment. Cops charged Reuben Frances, of 871 E. 179th St., Bronx, with felonious assault in the shooting of Hagan, and with Sullivan Law violation—possession of the .45. Police recovered the shotgun and the .45.

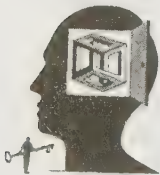
***The Amsterdam News* (February 27, 1965)**

"We interrupt this program to bring you a special newscast . . .," the announcer said as the Sunday afternoon movie on the TV set was halted temporarily. "Malcolm X was shot four times while addressing a crowd at the Audubon Ballroom on 166th Street." "Oh no!" That was my first reaction to the shocking event that followed one week after the slender, articulate leader of the Afro-American Unity was routed from his East Elmhurst home by a bomb explosion. Minutes later we alighted from a cab at the corner of Broadway and 166th St. just a short 15 blocks from where I live on Broadway. About 200 men and women, neatly dressed, were milling around, some with expressions of awe and disbelief. Others were in small clusters talking loudly and with deep emotion in their voices. Mostly they were screaming for vengeance. One woman, small, dressed in a light gray coat and her eyes flaming with indignation, argued with a cop at the St. Nicholas corner of the block. "This is not the end of it. What they were going to do to the Statue of Liberty will be small in comparison. We black people are tired of being shoved around." Standing across the street near the memorial park one of Malcolm's close associates commented: "It's a shame." Later he added that "if it's war they want, they'll get it." He would not say whether Elijah Muhammed's followers had anything to do with the assassination. About 3:30 p.m. Malcolm X's wife, Betty, was escorted by three men and a woman from the Columbia Presbyterian Hospital. Tears streamed down her face. She was screaming, "They killed him!" Malcolm X had no last words. . . . The bombing and burning of the No. 7 Mosque early Tuesday morning was the first blow by those who are seeking revenge for the cold-blooded murder of a man who at 39 might have grown to the stature of respectable leadership. ■

### Questions for Analysis

1. What details of the events has each writer *selected* to focus on?
2. How has each writer *organized* the details that have been selected? Remember that most news organizations present what they consider the most important information first and the least important information last.
3. How does each writer *interpret* Malcolm X, his followers, the gunmen, and the significance of the assassination?
4. How has each author used *language* to express his/her perspective and to influence the thinking of the reader? ◀

### THINKING ACTIVITY 4.4 ANALYZING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES



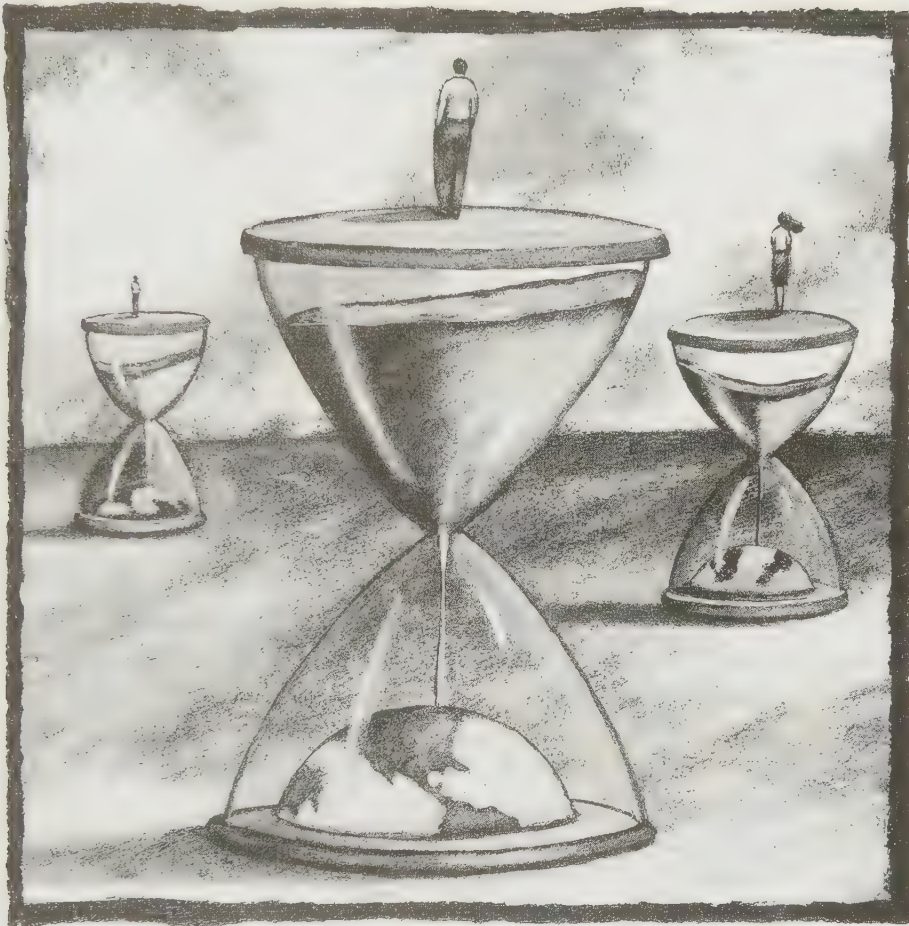
Locate three different newspaper or magazine accounts of an important event—a court decision, a crime, and a political demonstration are possible topics. Analyze the perceptual “lenses” of each of the writers by answering the questions in Thinking Activity 4.3. ◀

### EXPERIENCES SHAPE YOUR PERCEPTIONS

Your ways of viewing the world are developed over a long period of time through the experiences you have and your thinking about these experiences. As you think critically about your perceptions, you learn more from your experiences and about how you make sense of the world. Your perceptions may be strengthened by this understanding, or they may be changed by this understanding. For example, read the following student passage and consider the way her experiences—and her reflection on these experiences—contributed to shaping her perspective on the world.

#### Acquired Knowledge

When news of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome first began to spread, it was just another one of those issues on the news that I felt did not really concern me. Along with cancer, leukemia, and kidney failure, I knew



*Your world and your perception of it are created by your ongoing experiences and your reflections on these events.*

these diseases ran rampant across the country, but they didn't affect me.

Once the AIDS crisis became a prevalent problem in society, I began to take a little notice of it, but my interest only extended as far as taking precautions to insure that I would not contract the disease. Sure, I felt sorry for all the people who were dying from it, but again, it was not my problem.

My father was an intravenous drug user for as long as I can remember. This was a fact of life when I was growing up. I knew that what he was doing was wrong, and that eventually he would die from it, but I also knew that he would never change.

On July 27th, my father died. An autopsy showed his cause of death as pneumonia and tuberculosis, seemingly natural causes. However, I was later informed that these were two very common symptoms related to carriers of the HIV virus. My father's years of drug abuse had finally caught up with him. He had died from AIDS.

My father's death changed my life. Prior to that, I had always felt that as long as a situation did not directly affect me, it was really no concern of mine. I felt that somewhere, someone would take care of it. Having a crisis strike so close to me made me wake up to reality. Suddenly I became acutely aware of all the things that are wrong in the world. I began to see the problems of AIDS, famine, homelessness, unemployment, and others from a personal point of view, and I began to feel that I had an obligation to join the crusade to do something about these problems.

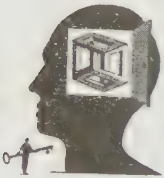
I organized a youth coalition called UPLIFT INC. In this group, we meet and talk about the problems in society, as well as the everyday problems that any of our members may have in their lives. We organize shows (talent shows, fashion shows) and give a large portion of our proceeds to the American Foundation for AIDS Research, the Coalition for the Homeless, and many other worthy organizations.

Now I feel that I am doing my duty as a human being by trying to help those who are less fortunate than myself. My father's death gave me insight into my own mortality. Now I know that life is too short not to only try to enjoy it, but to really achieve something worthwhile out of it. Material gains matter only if you are willing to take your good fortune and spread it around to those who could use it.



In the reading selection located on page 156, a former migrant worker and current union organizer named Roberto Acuna describes changes in his perceptions of his world. Acuna's story illustrates the main purpose of our ongoing attempts to think critically about the way our experiences shape our perceptions. By engaging in this process, we are continually trying to develop a clearer and more complete understanding of what is taking place so that we can make the most effective decisions in our lives. Because our perceptions are based on our experiences, they often change and evolve based on new experiences. Analyzing Roberto Acuna's personal odyssey will illustrate how experiences can shape and reshape our perceptions.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 4.5 *DESCRIBING A SHAPING EXPERIENCE*



Think of an experience that has shaped your life. Write an essay describing the experience and the ways it changed your life and how you perceive the world. After writing, analyze your experience by answering the following questions.

1. What were your *initial* perceptions of the situation? As you began the experience, you brought into the situation certain perceptions about the experience and the people involved.
2. What previous experiences had you undergone? Identify some of the influences that helped to shape these perceptions. Describe the actions that you either took or thought about taking.
3. As you became involved in the situation, what experiences in the situation influenced you to question or doubt your initial perceptions?
4. In what new ways did you view the situation that would better explain what was taking place? Identify the revised perceptions that you began to form about the experience. ◀

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## THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT PERCEPTIONS

So far, we have emphasized the great extent to which you actively participate in what you perceive by selecting, organizing, and interpreting. We have suggested that each of us views the world through our own unique lenses. This means that no two of us perceive the world in exactly the same way.

Because we actively participate in selecting, organizing, and interpreting the sensations we experience, however, our perceptions are often incomplete, inaccurate, or subjective. To complicate the situation even more, our own

limitations in perceiving are not the only ones that can cause us problems. Other people often purposefully create perceptions and misperceptions. An advertiser who wants to sell a product may try to create the impression that your life will be changed if you use this product. Or a person who wants to discredit someone else may spread untrue rumors about her in order to influence others' perceptions of her.

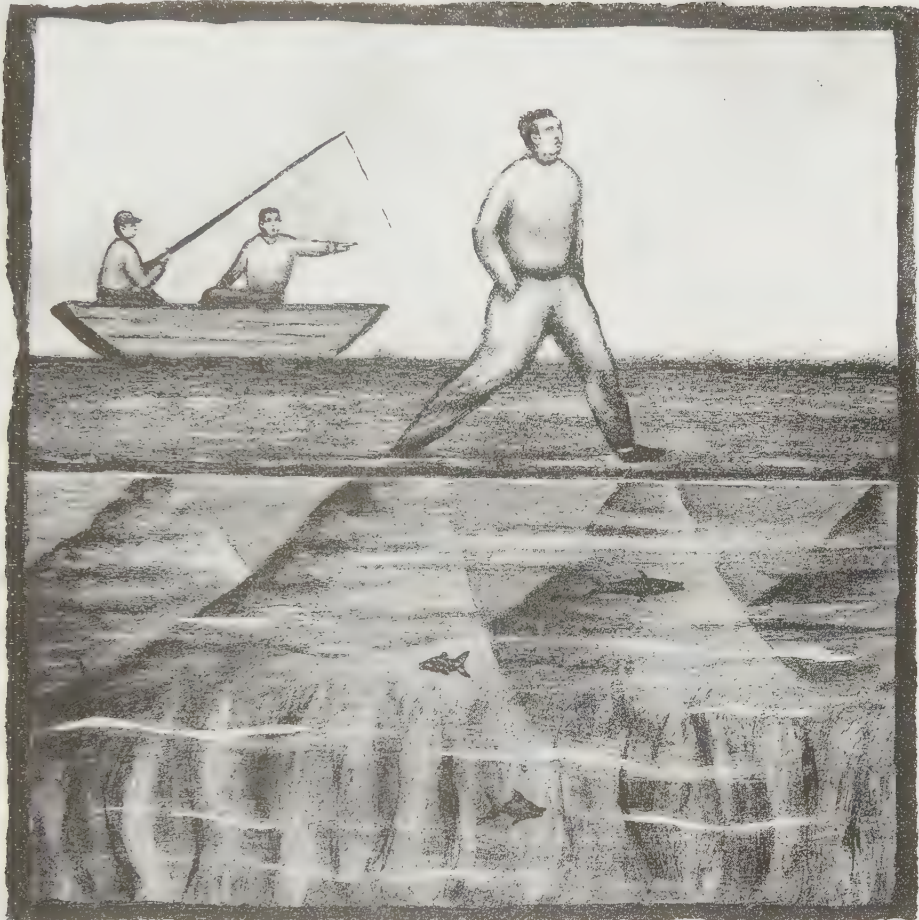
The only way you can correct the mistakes, distortions, and incompleteness of your perceptions is to *become aware* of this normally unconscious process by which you perceive and make sense of your world. By becoming aware of this process, you can think critically about what is going on and then correct your mistakes and distortions. In other words, you can use your critical thinking abilities to create a clearer and more informed idea of what is taking place. Perception alone cannot be totally relied on, and if you remain unaware of how it operates and of your active role, then you will be unable to exert any control over it. And in that case, you will be convinced that the way *you see* the world is the way the world *is*, even when your perceptions are mistaken, distorted, or incomplete.

The first step in critically examining your perceptions is to be willing to *ask questions* about what you are perceiving. As long as you believe that the way you see things is the only way to see them, you will be unable to recognize when your perceptions are distorted or inaccurate. For instance, if you are certain that your interpretation of the boy at the computer in Thinking Activity 4.1 or the photograph in Thinking Activity 4.2 is the only correct one, then you will not be likely to try and see other possible interpretations. But if you are willing to question your perception ("What are some other possible interpretations?"), then you will open the way to more fully developing your perception of what is taking place.

Besides asking questions, you have to try to become aware of the personal factors your lenses bring to your perceptions. As you have seen, each of us brings to every situation a whole collection of expectations, interests, fears, and hopes that can influence what we are perceiving. Consider the following situations:

You've been fishing all day without a nibble. Suddenly you get a strike! You reel it in, but just as you're about to pull the fish into the boat, it frees itself from the hook and swims away. When you get back home later that night, your friends ask you: "How large was the fish that got away?"

The teacher asks you to evaluate the performance of a classmate who is giving a report to the class. You don't like this other student because he



*Perceptions are often incomplete or inaccurate, so we need to use our critical thinking abilities to create a clearer, more informed idea of what is taking place.*

acts as if he's superior to the rest of the students in the class. How do you evaluate his report?

You are asked to estimate the size of an audience attending an event that your organization has sponsored. How many people are there?

In each of these cases, you can imagine that your perceptions might be influenced by certain hopes, fears, or prejudices that you brought to the situation,



causing your observations to become distorted or inaccurate. Although you usually cannot eliminate the personal feelings that are influencing your perceptions, you can become aware of them and try to control them. For instance, if you are asked to evaluate a group of people, one of whom is a good friend, you should try to keep these personal feelings in mind when making your judgment in order to make your perceptions as accurate as possible.

As you saw in Chapter 2, critical thinkers strive to see things from different perspectives. One of the best ways to do so is by communicating with others and engaging in *dialogue* with them. This means exchanging and critically examining ideas in an open and organized way. Similarly, dialogue is one of the main ways that you check your perceptions—by asking others what their perceptions are and then comparing and contrasting these with your own. This is exactly what you did when you discussed the different possible interpretations of the boy at the computer and the ambiguous photograph. By exchanging your perceptions with the perceptions of other class members, you developed a more complete sense of how these different events could be viewed, as well as the reasons that support these different perspectives.

Looking for reasons that support various perceptions also involves trying to discover any independent proof or evidence regarding the perception. When evidence is available in the form of records, photographs, videotapes, or experimental results, this information will certainly help you evaluate the accuracy of your perceptions. For example, consider the situations just described. What are some of the independent forms of evidence you could look for in trying to verify your perceptions?

Thinking critically about your perceptions means trying to avoid developing impulsive or superficial perceptions that you are unwilling to change. As you saw in Chapter 2, critical thinkers are *thoughtful* in approaching the world and *open* to modifying their views in the light of new information or better insight. Consider the following perceptions:

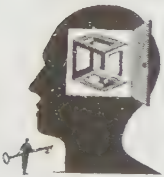
- Women are very emotional.
- Politicians are corrupt.
- Teenagers are wild and irresponsible.
- People who are good athletes are usually poor students.
- Men are thoughtless and insensitive.

These types of general perceptions are known as *stereotypes* because they express a belief about an entire group of people without recognizing the individual differences among members of the group. For instance, it is probably accurate to say that there are *some* politicians who are corrupt, but this is not the same thing as saying that all, or even most, politicians are corrupt. Stereotypes



affect your perception of the world because they encourage you to form an inaccurate and superficial idea of a whole group of people ("All teenagers are reckless drivers"). When you meet someone who falls into this group, you automatically perceive that person as having these stereotyped qualities ("This person is a teenager, so he is a reckless driver"). Even if you find that this person does not fit your stereotyped perception ("This teenager is not a reckless driver"), this sort of superficial and unthoughtful labeling does not encourage you to change your perception of the group as a whole. Instead, it encourages you to overlook the conflicting information in favor of your stereotyped perception ("All teenagers are reckless drivers—except for this one"). On the other hand, when you are perceiving in a thoughtful fashion, you try to see what a person is like as an individual, instead of trying to fit him or her into a pre-existing category.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 4.6 ANALYZING STEREOTYPES



1. Describe an incident in which you were perceived as a stereotype because of your age, ethnic or religious background, employment, accent, or place of residence.
2. Describe how it felt to be stereotyped in this way.
3. Explain what you think are the best ways to overcome stereotypes such as these. ◀

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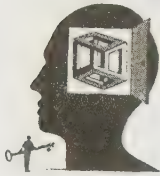
### SUMMARY

As your mind develops through the experiences you have and your reflection on these experiences, your perceptions of the world should continue to develop as well. By thinking critically about your perceptions, by seeking to view your world from perspectives other than your own and to understand the reasons that support these perspectives, your understanding of the world should become increasingly accurate and complete. You can view your efforts to think critically about what you are perceiving as a problem-solving process, as you continually attempt to interpret your experiences.

As you have seen in this chapter, much of your knowledge of the world begins with perceiving. But to develop knowledge and understanding, you must

make use of your thinking abilities in order to examine this experience critically. Increased understanding of the way the world operates thus increases the accuracy and completeness of your perceptions and leads you to informed beliefs about what is happening. In the next chapter we will be exploring further how to develop informed beliefs and knowledge of the world by combining perceptions with critical thinking.

### THINKING PASSAGE *MIGRANT WORKER*



This section is taken from the book *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do* by Studs Terkel. Terkel traveled throughout the United States interviewing people from a wide range of occupations, including farmers, steelworkers, corporate executives, and prostitutes. In his narrative, Roberto Acuna describes how he became an organizer for the United Farm Workers of America. At the beginning of his narrative, Acuna says, "The things I saw shaped my life." After reading his story, ask yourself, "Did 'things' shape Acuna's life? Or did Acuna shape and reshape the things he saw into his life?"

#### MIGRANT WORKER by Roberto Acuna

I walked out of the fields two years ago. I saw the need to change the California feudal system, to change the lives of farm workers, to make these huge corporations feel they're not above anybody. I am thirty-four years old and I try to organize for the United Farm Workers of America.

*His hands are calloused and each of his thumbnails is singularly cut.* If you're picking lettuce, the thumbnails fall off 'cause they're banged on the box. Your hands get swollen. You can't slow down because the foreman sees you're so many boxes behind and you'd better get on. But people would help each other. If you're feeling bad that day, somebody who's feeling pretty good would help. Any people that are suffering have to stick together, whether they like it or not, whether they be black, brown, or pink.

According to Mom, I was born on a cotton sack out in the fields, 'cause she had no money to go to the hospital. When I was a child, we used to migrate from California to Arizona and back and forth. The things I saw shaped my life. I remember when we used to go out and pick carrots and onions, the whole family. We tried to scratch a livin' out of the ground. I saw my parents cry out in despair, even though we had the whole family

working. At the time, they were paying sixty-two and a half cents an hour. The average income must have been fifteen hundred dollars, maybe two thousand.\*

This was supplemented by child labor. During those years, the growers used to have a Pick-Your-Harvest Week. They would get all the migrant kids out of school and have 'em out there pickin' the crops at peak harvest time. A child was off that week and when he went back to school, he got a little gold star. They would make it seem like something civic to do.

We'd pick everything: lettuce, carrots, onions, cucumbers, cauliflower, broccoli, tomatoes—all the salads you could make out of vegetables, we picked 'em. Citrus fruits, watermelons—you name it. We'd be in Salinas about four months. From there we'd go down into the Imperial Valley. From there we'd go to picking citrus. It was like a cycle. We'd follow the seasons.

After my dad died, my mom would come home and she'd go into her tent and I would go into ours. We'd roughhouse and everything and then we'd go into the tent where Mom was sleeping and I'd see her crying. When I asked her why she was crying she never gave me an answer. All she said was things would get better. She retired a beaten old lady with a lot of dignity. That day she thought would be better never came for her.

One time, my mom was in bad need of money, so she got a part-time evening job in a restaurant. I'd be helping her. All the growers would come in and they'd be laughing, making nasty remarks, and make passes at her. I used to go out there and kick 'em and my mom told me to leave 'em alone, she could handle 'em. But they would embarrass her and she would cry.

My mom was a very proud woman. She brought us up without any help from nobody. She kept the family strong. They say that a family that prays together stays together. I say that a family that works together stays together—because of the suffering. . . .

I'd go barefoot to school. The bad thing was they used to laugh at us, the Anglo kids. They would laugh because we'd bring tortillas and frijoles to lunch. They would have their nice little compact lunch boxes with cold milk in their thermos and they'd laugh at us because all we had was dried tortillas. Not only would they laugh at us, but the kids would pick fights.

\* "Today, because of our struggles, the pay is up to two dollars an hour. Yet we know that is not enough."

My older brother used to do most of the fighting for me and he'd come home with black eyes all the time.

I wanted to be accepted. It must have been in sixth grade. It was just before the Fourth of July. They were trying out students for this patriotic play. I wanted to do Abe Lincoln, so I learned the Gettysburg Address inside and out. I'd be out in the fields pickin' the crops and I'd be memorizin'. I was the only one who didn't have to read the part, 'cause I learned it. The part was given to a girl who was a grower's daughter. She had to read it out of a book, but they said she had better diction. I was very disappointed. I quit about eighth grade.

Any time anybody'd talk to me about politics, about civil rights, I would ignore it. It's a very degrading thing because you can't express yourself. They wanted us to speak English in the school classes. We'd put out a real effort. I would get into a lot of fights because I spoke Spanish and they couldn't understand it. I was punished. I was kept after school for not speaking English.

We used to have our own tents on the truck. Most migrants would live in the tents that were already there in the fields, put up by the company. We got one for ourselves, secondhand, but it was ours. Anglos used to laugh at us. "Here comes the carnival," they'd say. We couldn't keep our clothes clean, we couldn't keep nothing clean, because we'd go by the dirt roads and the dust. We'd stay outside the town.

I never did want to go to town because it was a very bad thing for me. We used to go to the small stores, even though we got clipped more. If we went to the other stores, they would laugh at us. They would always point at us with a finger. We'd go to town maybe every two weeks to get what we needed. Everybody would walk in a bunch. We were afraid. (Laughs.) We sang to keep our spirits up. We joked about our poverty. This one guy would say, "When I get to be rich, I'm gonna marry an Anglo woman, so I can be accepted into society." The other guy would say, "When I get rich I'm gonna marry a Mexican woman, so I can go to that Anglo society of yours and see them hang you for marrying an Anglo." Our world was around the fields.

I started picking crops when I was eight. I couldn't do much, but every little bit counts. Every time I would get behind on my chores, I would get a carrot thrown at me by my parents. I would daydream: If I were a millionaire, I would buy all these ranches and give them back to the people. I would picture my mom living in one area all the time and being admired by all the people in the community. All of a sudden I'd be rudely awakened by a broken carrot in my back. That would bust your whole dream apart and you'd work for a while and come back to daydreaming.



We used to work early, about four o'clock in the morning. We'd pick the harvest until about six. Then we'd run home and get into our supposedly clean clothes and run all the way to school because we'd be late. By the time we got to school, we'd be all tuckered out. Around maybe eleven o'clock, we'd be dozing off. Our teachers would send notes to the house telling Mom that we were inattentive. The only thing I'd make fairly good grades on was spelling. I couldn't do anything else. Many times we never did our homework, because we were out in the fields. The teachers couldn't understand that. I would get whacked there also.

School would end maybe four o'clock. We'd rush home again, change clothes, go back to work until seven, seven-thirty at night. That's not counting the weekends. On Saturday and Sunday, we'd be there from four-thirty in the morning until about seven-thirty in the evening. This is where we made the money, those two days. We all worked.

I would carry boxes for my mom to pack the carrots in. I would pull the carrots out and she would sort them into different sizes. I would get water for her to drink. When you're picking tomatoes, the boxes are heavy. They weigh about thirty pounds. They're dropped very hard on the trucks so they have to be sturdy.

The hardest work would be thinning and hoeing with a short-handled hoe. The fields would be about a half mile long. We would be bending and stooping all day. Sometimes you would have hard ground and by the time you got home, your hands would be full of calluses. And you'd have a backache. Sometimes I wouldn't have dinner or anything. I'd just go home and fall asleep and wake up just in time to go out to the fields again.

The grower would keep the families apart, hoping they'd fight against each other. He'd have three or four camps and he'd have the people over here pitted against the people over there. For jobs. He'd give the best crops to the people he thought were the fastest workers. This way he kept you going harder and harder, competing.

When I was sixteen, I had my first taste as a foreman. Handling braceros, aliens, that came from Mexico to work. They'd bring these people to work over here and then send them back to Mexico after the season was over. My job was to make sure they did a good job and pushin' 'em even harder. I was a company man, yes. My parents needed money and I wanted to make sure they were proud of me. A foreman is recognized. I was very naive. Even though I was pushing the workers, I knew their problems. They didn't know how to write, so I would write letters home for them. I would take them to town, buy their clothes, outside of the company stores. They paid me \$1.10 an hour. The farm workers' wage was raised to eighty-two and a half cents. But even the braceros were making more money

than me, because they were working piecework. I asked for more money. The manager said, "If you don't like it you can quit." I quit and joined the Marine Corps.

I joined the Marine Corps at seventeen. I was very mixed up. I wanted to become a first-class citizen. I wanted to be accepted and I was very proud of my uniform. My mom didn't want to sign the papers, but she knew I had to better myself and maybe I'd get an education in the services.

I did many jobs. I took a civil service exam and was very proud when I passed. Most of the others were college kids. There were only three Chicanos in the group of sixty. I got a job as a correctional officer in a state prison. I quit after eight months because I couldn't take the misery I saw. They wanted me to use a rubber hose on some of the prisoners—mostly Chicanos and blacks. I couldn't do it. They called me chicken-livered because I didn't want to hit nobody. They constantly harassed me after that. I didn't quit because I was afraid of them but because they were trying to make me into a mean man. I couldn't see it. This was Soledad State Prison.

I began to see how everything was so wrong. When growers can have an intricate watering system to irrigate their crops but they can't have running water inside the houses of workers. Veterinarians tend to the needs of domestic animals but they can't have medical care for the workers. They can have land subsidies for the growers but they can't have adequate unemployment compensation for the workers. They treat him like a farm implement. In fact, they treat their implements better and their domestic animals better. They have heat and insulated barns for the animals but the workers live in beat-up shacks with no heat at all.

Illness in the fields is 120 percent higher than the average rate for industry. It's mostly back trouble, rheumatism and arthritis, because of the damp weather and the cold. Stoop labor is very hard on a person. Tuberculosis is high. And now because of the pesticides, we have many respiratory diseases.

The University of California at Davis has government experiments with pesticides and chemicals. To get a bigger crop each year. They haven't any regard as to what safety precautions are needed. In 1964 or '65, an airplane was spraying these chemicals on the fields. Spraying rigs they're called. Flying low, the wheels got tangled on the fence wire. The pilot got up, dusted himself off, and got a drink of water. He died of convulsions. The ambulance attendants got violently sick because of the pesticides he had on his person. A little girl was playing around a sprayer. She stuck her tongue on it. She died instantly.

These pesticides affect the farm worker through the lungs. He breathes it in. He gets no compensation. All they do is say he's sick. They don't investigate the cause.

There were times when I felt I couldn't take it any more. It was 105 in the shade and I'd see endless rows of lettuce and I felt my back hurting . . . I felt the frustration of not being able to get out of the fields. I was getting ready to jump any foreman who looked at me cross-eyed. But until two years ago, my world was still very small.

I would read all these things in the papers about Cesar Chavez and I would denounce him because I still had that thing about becoming a first-class patriotic citizen. In Mexicali they would pass out leaflets and I would throw 'em away. I never participated. The grape boycott didn't affect me much because I was in lettuce. It wasn't until Chavez came to Salinas, where I was working in the fields, that I saw what a beautiful man he was. I went to this rally, I still intended to stay with the company. But something—I don't know—I was close to the workers. They couldn't speak English and wanted me to be their spokesman in favor of going on strike. I don't know—I just got caught up with it all, the beautiful feeling of solidarity.

You'd see the people on the picket lines at four in the morning, at the camp fires, heating up beans and coffee and tortillas. It gave me a sense of belonging. These were my own people and they wanted change. I knew this is what I was looking for. I just didn't know it before.

My mom had always wanted me to better myself. I wanted to better myself because of her. Now when the strikes started, I told her I was going to join the union and the whole movement. I told her I was going to work without pay. She said she was proud of me. (His eyes glisten. A long, long pause.) See, I told her I wanted to be with my people. If I were a company man, nobody would like me any more. I had to belong to somebody and this was it right here. She said, "I pushed you in your early years to try to better yourself and get a social position. But I see that's not the answer. I know I'll be proud of you."

All kinds of people are farm workers, not just Chicanos. Filipinos started the strike. We have Puerto Ricans and Appalachians too, Arabs, some Japanese, some Chinese. At one time they used us against each other. But now they can't and they're scared, the growers. They can organize conglomerates. Yet when we try organization to better our lives, they are afraid. Suffering people never dreamed it could be different. Cesar Chavez tells them this and they grasp the idea—and this is what scares the growers.

Now the machines are coming in. It takes skill to operate them. But anybody can be taught. We feel migrant workers should be given the chance. They got one for grapes. They got one for lettuce. They have cotton machines that took jobs away from thousands of farm workers. The people wind up in the ghettos of the city, their culture, their families, their unity destroyed.

We're trying to stipulate it in our contract that the company will not use any machinery without the consent of the farm workers. So we can make sure the people being replaced by the machines will know how to operate the machines.

Working in the fields is not in itself a degrading job. It's hard, but if you're given regular hours, better pay, decent housing, unemployment and medical compensation, pension plans—we have a very relaxed way of living. But the growers don't recognize us as persons. That's the worst thing, the way they treat you. Like we have no brains.

Now we see they have no brains. They have only a wallet in their head. The more you squeeze it, the more they cry out.

If we had proper compensation, we wouldn't have to be working seventeen hours a day and following the crops. We could stay in one area and it would give us roots. Being a migrant, it tears the family apart. You get in debt. You leave the area penniless. The children are the ones hurt the most. They go to school three months in one place and then on to another. No sooner do they make friends, they are uprooted again. Right here, your childhood is taken away. So when they grow up, they're looking for this childhood they have lost.

If people could see—in the winter, ice on the fields. We'd be on our knees all day long. We'd build fires and warm up real fast and go back onto the ice. We'd be picking watermelons in 105 degrees all day long. When people have melons or cucumber or carrots or lettuce, they don't know how they got on their table and the consequences to the people who picked it. If I had enough money, I would take busloads of people out to the fields and into the labor camps. Then they'd know how that fine salad got on their table. ■

### *Questions for Analysis*

1. *Initial Perceptions* What were Acuna's initial perceptions of being a migrant worker? Of his future goals? Of the growers? Of his fellow migrant workers?

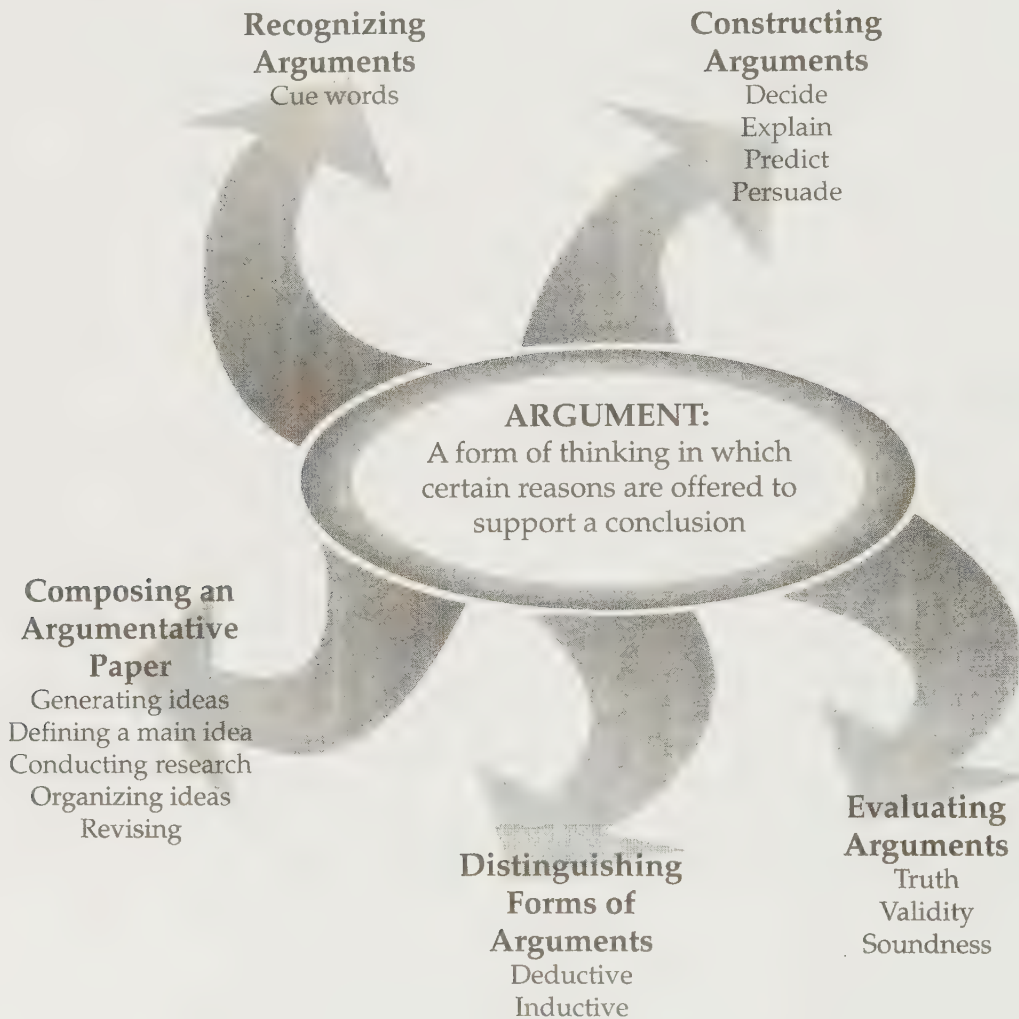


2. *Experiences That Shaped His Initial Perceptions* What experiences shaped his initial perceptions about being a migrant worker? Of his future goals? Of the growers? Of his fellow migrant workers?
3. *Experiences That Raised Doubts and Questions About His Initial Perceptions*
  - a. How did becoming a foreman raise doubts about his initial perceptions?
  - b. How did becoming a correctional officer raise doubts about his initial perceptions?
  - c. How did meeting Cesar Chavez raise doubts about his initial perceptions?
4. *Revised Perceptions He Formed About His Situation* What were Acuna's revised perceptions of being a migrant worker? Of his future goals? Of the growers? Of his fellow migrant workers? ◀

## CHAPTER

# 10

## CONSTRUCTING ARGUMENTS



CONSIDER CAREFULLY the following dialogue about whether marijuana should be legalized:

*Dennis:* Did you hear about the person who was sentenced to fifteen years in prison for possessing marijuana? I think this is one of the most outrageously unjust punishments I've ever heard of! In most states, people who are convicted of armed robbery, rape, or even murder don't receive fifteen-year sentences. And unlike the possession of marijuana, these crimes violate the rights of other people.

*Caroline:* I agree that this is one case in which the punishment doesn't seem to fit the crime. But you have to realize that drugs pose a serious threat to the young people of our country. Look at all the people who are addicted to drugs, who have their lives ruined, and who often die at an early age of overdoses. And think of all the crimes committed by people to support their drug habits. As a result, sometimes society has to make an example of someone—like the person you mentioned—to convince people of the seriousness of the situation.

*Dennis:* That's ridiculous. In the first place, it's not right to punish someone unfairly just to provide an example. At least not in a society that believes in justice. And in the second place, smoking marijuana is nothing like using drugs such as heroin or even cocaine. It follows that smoking marijuana should not be against the law.

*Caroline:* I don't agree. Although marijuana might not be as dangerous as some other drugs, smoking it surely isn't good for you. And I don't think that anything that is a threat to your health should be legal.

*Dennis:* What about cigarettes and alcohol? We *know* that they are dangerous. Medical research has linked smoking cigarettes to lung cancer, emphysema, and heart disease, and alcohol damages the liver. No one has proved that marijuana is a threat to our health. And even if it does turn out to be somewhat unhealthy, it's certainly not as dangerous as cigarettes and alcohol.

*Caroline:* That's a good point. But to tell you the truth, I'm not so sure that cigarettes and alcohol should be legal. And in any case, they are already legal. Just because cigarettes and alcohol are bad for your health is no reason to legalize another drug that can cause health problems.

*Dennis:* Look—life is full of risks. We take chances every time we cross the street or climb into our car. In fact, with all of these loonies on the road, driving is a lot more hazardous to our health than any of the drugs around. And many of the foods we eat can kill. For example, red meat contributes

to heart disease, and artificial sweeteners can cause cancer. The point is, if people want to take chances with their health, that's up to them. And many people in our society like to mellow out with marijuana. I read somewhere that over 70 percent of the people in the United States think that marijuana should be legalized.

*Caroline:* There's a big difference between letting people drive cars and letting them use dangerous drugs. Society has a responsibility to protect people from themselves. People often do things that are foolish if they are encouraged or given the opportunity to. Legalizing something like marijuana encourages people to use it, especially young people. It follows that many more people would use marijuana if it were legalized. It's like society saying "This is all right—go ahead and use it."

*Dennis:* I still maintain that marijuana isn't dangerous. It's not addictive—like heroin is—and there is no evidence that it harms you. Consequently, anything that is harmless should be legal.

*Caroline:* Marijuana may not be physically addictive like heroin, but I think that it can be psychologically addictive, because people tend to use more and more of it over time. I know a number of people who spend a lot of their time getting high. What about Carl? All he does is lie around and get high. This shows that smoking it over a period of time definitely affects your mind. Think about the people you know who smoke a lot—don't they seem to be floating in a dream world? How are they ever going to make anything of their lives? As far as I'm concerned, a pothead is like a zombie—living but dead.

*Dennis:* Since you have had so little experience with marijuana, I don't think that you can offer an informed opinion on the subject. And anyway, if you do too much of anything it can hurt you. Even something as healthy as exercise can cause problems if you do too much of it. But I sure don't see anything wrong with toking up with some friends at a party or even getting into a relaxed state by yourself. In fact, I find that I can even concentrate better on my school work after taking a little smoke.

*Caroline:* If you believe that, then marijuana really *has* damaged your brain. You're just trying to rationalize your drug habit. Smoking marijuana doesn't help you concentrate—it takes you away from reality. And I don't think that people can control it. Either you smoke and surrender control of your life, or you don't smoke because you want to retain control. There's nothing in between.

*Dennis:* Let me point out something to you. Because marijuana is illegal, organized crime controls its distribution and makes all the money from it.



If marijuana were legalized, the government could tax the sale of it—like cigarettes and alcohol—and then use the money for some worthwhile purpose. For example, many states have legalized gambling and use the money to support education. In fact, the major tobacco companies have already copyrighted names for different marijuana brands—like “Acapulco Gold.” Obviously they believe that marijuana will soon become legal.

*Caroline:* Just because the government can make money out of something doesn’t mean that they should legalize it. We could also legalize prostitution or muggings, and then tax the proceeds. Also, simply because the cigarette companies are prepared to sell marijuana doesn’t mean that it makes sense to. After all, they’re the ones who are selling us cigarettes.

Continue this dialogue, incorporating other views on the subject of legalizing marijuana.

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## RECOGNIZING ARGUMENTS

The preceding discussion is an illustration of two people engaging in *dialogue*, which we have defined (in Chapter 2) as the systematic exchange of ideas. Participating in this sort of dialogue with others is one of the keys to thinking critically because it stimulates you to develop your mind by carefully examining the way you make sense of the world. Discussing issues with others encourages you to be mentally active, to ask questions, to view issues from different perspectives, and to develop reasons to support conclusions. It is this last quality of thinking critically—supporting conclusions with reasons—that we will focus on in this chapter and the next.

When we offer reasons to support a conclusion, we are considered to be presenting an *argument*.

<b>Argument</b>	A form of thinking in which certain statements (reasons) are offered in support of another statement (a conclusion)
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At the beginning of the dialogue, Dennis presents the following argument against imposing a fifteen-year sentence for possession of marijuana (argument 1):

**Reason:** Possessing marijuana is not a serious offense because it hurts no one.

**Reason:** There are many other more serious offenses in which victims' basic rights are violated—such as armed robbery, rape, and murder—for which the offenders don't receive such stiff sentences.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, a fifteen-year sentence is an unjust punishment for possessing marijuana.

Can you identify an additional reason that supports this conclusion?

**Reason:**

The definition of *argument* given here is somewhat different from the meaning of the concept in our ordinary language. In common speech, "argument" usually refers to a dispute or quarrel between people, often involving intense feelings (for example: "I got into a terrible argument with the idiot who hit the back of my car"). Very often these quarrels involve people presenting arguments in the sense in which we have defined the concept, although the arguments are usually not carefully reasoned or clearly stated because the people are so angry. Instead of this common usage, in this chapter we will use its more technical meaning.

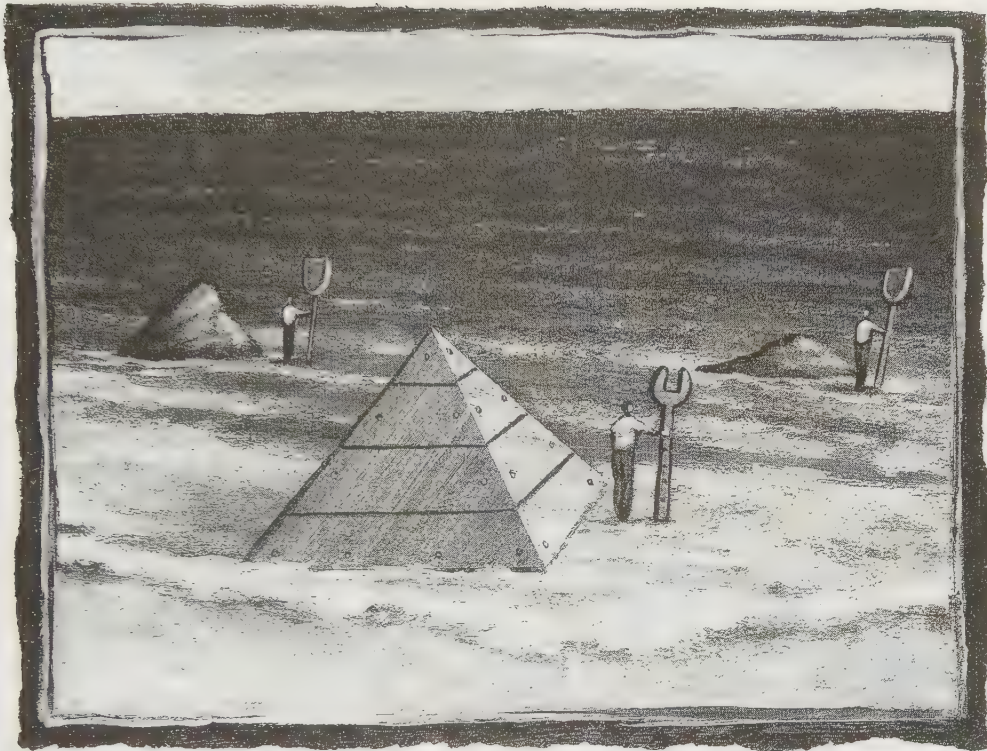
Using our definition, we can define the main ideas that make up an argument:

<b>Reasons</b>	Statements that support another statement (known as a conclusion), justify it, or make it more probable
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<b>Conclusion</b>	A statement that explains, asserts, or predicts on the basis of statements (known as reasons) that are offered as evidence for it
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The type of thinking that uses argument—reasons in support of conclusions—is known as *reasoning*, and it is a type of thinking you have been doing throughout this book, as well as in much of your life. We are continually trying to explain, justify, and predict things through the process of reasoning.

Of course, our reasoning—and the reasoning of others—is not always correct. For example, the reasons someone offers may not really support the conclusion they are supposed to. Or the conclusion may not really follow from the



*Constructing sound arguments involves supporting our conclusions with strong and compelling reasons.*

reasons stated. These difficulties are illustrated in a number of the arguments contained in the discussion on marijuana. Nevertheless, whenever we accept a conclusion as likely or true based on certain reasons or whenever we offer reasons to support a conclusion, we are using arguments to engage in reasoning—even if our reasoning is weak or faulty and needs to be improved. In this chapter and the next, we will be exploring both the way we construct effective arguments and the way we evaluate arguments to develop and sharpen our reasoning ability.

Let us return to the discussion about marijuana. After Dennis presents the argument with the conclusion that the fifteen-year prison sentence is an unjust punishment, Caroline considers that argument. Although she acknowledges that in this case “the punishment doesn’t seem to fit the crime,” she goes on to offer another argument (argument 2), giving reasons that lead to a conclusion that conflicts with the one Dennis drew:

**Reason:** Drugs pose a very serious threat to the young people of our country.

**Reason:** Many crimes are committed to support drug habits.

**Conclusion:** As a result, sometimes society has to make an example of someone to convince people of the seriousness of the situation.

Can you identify an additional reason that supports this conclusion?

**Reason:**

### *Cue Words for Arguments*

Our language provides guidance in our efforts to identify reasons and conclusions. Certain key words, known as *cue words*, signal that a reason is being offered in support of a conclusion or that a conclusion is being announced on the basis of certain reasons. For example, in response to Caroline's conclusion that society sometimes has to make an example of someone to convince people of the seriousness of the situation, Dennis gives the following argument (argument 3):

**Reason:** In the first place, it's not right to punish someone unfairly just to provide an example.

**Reason:** In the second place, smoking marijuana is nothing like using drugs such as heroin or even cocaine.

**Conclusion:** It follows that smoking marijuana should not be against the law.

In this argument, the phrases "In the first place" and "In the second place" signal that reasons are being offered in support of a conclusion. Similarly, the phrase "It follows that" signals that a conclusion is being announced on the basis of certain reasons. Here is a list of the most commonly used cue words for reasons and conclusions:

#### *Cue Words Signaling Reasons*

since	in view of
for	first, second
because	in the first (second) place
as shown by	may be inferred from
as indicated by	may be deduced from
given that	may be derived from
assuming that	for the reason that

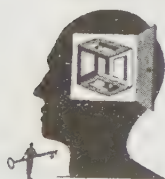


*Cue Words Signaling Conclusions*

therefore	then
thus	it follows that
hence	thereby showing
so	demonstrates that
(which) shows that	allows us to infer that
(which) proves that	suggests very strongly that
implies that	you see that
points to	leads me to believe that
as a result	allows us to deduce that
consequently	

Of course, identifying reasons, conclusions, and arguments involves more than looking for cue words. The words and phrases listed here do not always signal reasons and conclusions, and in many cases arguments are made without the use of cue words. Cue words, however, do help alert us that an argument is being made.

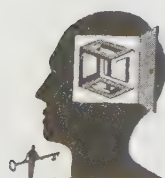
**THINKING ACTIVITY 10.1** *IDENTIFYING ARGUMENTS WITH CUE WORDS*



1. Review the discussion on marijuana and underline any cue words signaling that reasons are being offered or that conclusions are being announced.
2. With the aid of cue words, identify the various arguments contained in the discussion on marijuana. For each argument, describe
  - a. The *reasons* offered in support of a conclusion
  - b. The *conclusion* announced on the basis of the reasons

Before you start, review the three arguments we have examined thus far in this chapter.
3. Go back to the additional arguments you wrote on page 397. Reorganize and add cue words if necessary to clearly identify your reasons as well as the conclusion you drew from those reasons. ◀

**THINKING PASSAGES** *LEGALIZING DRUGS*



The following two essays discuss the issue of whether drugs should be legalized. The first passage, "Drugs," is written by Gore Vidal, a well-known essayist and novelist. The second, "The Case for Slavery," is authored by the *New York Times* editor and columnist A. M. Rosenthal. After carefully reading the essays, answer the questions that follow.

**DRUGS**  
**by Gore Vidal**

It is possible to stop most drug addiction in the United States within a very short time. Simply make all drugs available and sell them at cost. Label each drug with a precise description of what effect—good and bad—the drug will have on the taker. This will require heroic honesty. Don't say that marijuana is addictive or dangerous when it is neither, as millions of people know—unlike "speed," which kills most unpleasantly, or heroin, which is addictive and difficult to kick.

For the record, I have tried—once—almost every drug and liked none, disproving the popular Fu Manchu theory that a single whiff of opium will enslave the mind. Nevertheless many drugs are bad for certain people to take and they should be told why in a sensible way.

Along with exhortation and warning, it might be good for our citizens to recall (or learn for the first time) that the United States was the creation of men who believed that each man has the right to do what he wants with his own life as long as he does not interfere with his neighbor's pursuit of happiness. (That his neighbor's idea of happiness is persecuting others does confuse matters a bit.)

This is a startling notion to the current generation of Americans. They reflect a system of public education which has made the Bill of Rights, literally, unacceptable to a majority of high school graduates who now form the "silent majority"—a phrase which that underestimated wit Richard Nixon took from Homer who used it to describe the dead.

Now one can hear the warning rumble begin: If everyone is allowed to take drugs everyone will and the GNP will decrease, the Commies will stop us from making everyone free, and we shall end up a race of zombies, passively murmuring "groovy" to one another. Alarming thought. Yet it seems most unlikely that any reasonably sane person will become a drug addict if he knows in advance what addiction is going to be like.

Is everyone reasonably sane? No. Some people will always become drug addicts just as some people will always become alcoholics, and it is just too bad. Every man, however, has the power (and should have the legal right) to kill himself if he chooses. But since most men don't, they won't be mainliners either. Nevertheless, forbidding people things they like or think they might enjoy only makes them want those things all the more. This psychological insight is, for some mysterious reason, perennially denied our governors.

It is a lucky thing for the American moralist that our country has always existed in a kind of time-vacuum: We have no public memory of anything that happened before last Tuesday. No one in Washington today recalls what happened during the years alcohol was forbidden to the people by a Congress that thought it had a divine mission to stamp out Demon Rum—launching, in the process, the greatest crime wave in the country's history, causing thousands of deaths from bad alcohol, and creating a general (and persisting) contempt among the citizenry for the laws of the United States.

The same thing is happening today. But the government has learned nothing from past attempts at prohibition, not to mention repression.

Last year when the supply of Mexican marijuana was slightly curtailed by the Feds, the pushers got the kids hooked on heroin and deaths increased dramatically, particularly in New York. Whose fault? Evil men like the Mafiosi? Permissive Dr. Spock? Wild-eyed Dr. Leary? No.

The Government of the United States was responsible for those deaths. The bureaucratic machine has a vested interest in playing cops and robbers. Both the Bureau of Narcotics and the Mafia want strong laws against the sale and use of drugs because if drugs are sold at cost there would be no money in it for anyone.

If there was no money in it for the Mafia, there would be no friendly playground pushers, and addicts would not commit crimes to pay for the next fix. Finally, if there was no money in it, the Bureau of Narcotics would wither away, something they are not about to do without a struggle.

Will anything sensible be done? Of course not. The American people are as devoted to the idea of sin and its punishment as they are to making money—and fighting drugs is nearly as big a business as pushing them. Since the combination of sin and money is irresistible (particularly to the professional politician), the situation will only grow worse. ■

### THE CASE FOR SLAVERY

by A. M. Rosenthal

Across the country, a scattered but influential collection of intellectuals is intensely engaged in making the case for slavery.

With considerable passion, these Americans are repeatedly expounding the benefits of not only tolerating slavery but legalizing it:

It would make life less dangerous for the free. It would save a great deal of money. And since the economies could be used to improve the lot of the slaves, in the end they would be better off.

The new antiabolitionists, like their predecessors in the nineteenth century, concede that those now in bondage do not themselves see the benefits of legalizing their status.

But in time they will, we are assured, because the beautiful part of legalization is that slavery would be designed so as to keep slaves pacified with the very thing that enslaves them!

The form of slavery under discussion is drug addiction. It does not have every characteristic of more traditional forms of bondage. But they have enough in common to make the comparison morally valid—and the campaign for drug legalization morally disgusting.

Like the plantation slavery that was a foundation of American society for so long, drug addiction largely involves specifiable groups of people. Most of the enchained are children and adolescents of all colors and black and Hispanic adults.

Like plantation slavery, drug addiction is passed on from generation to generation. And this may be the most important similarity: Like plantation slavery, addiction can destroy among its victims the social resources most valuable to free people for their own betterment—family life, family traditions, family values.

In plantation-time America, mothers were taken from their children. In drug-time America, mothers abandon their children. Do the children suffer less, or the mothers?

Antiabolitionists argue that legalization would make drugs so cheap and available that the profit for crime would be removed. Well-supplied addicts would be peaceful addicts. We would not waste billions for jails and could spend some of the savings helping the addicted become drug-free.

That would happen at the very time that new millions of Americans were being enticed into addiction by legalization—somehow.

Are we really foolish enough to believe that tens of thousands of drug gang members would meekly steal away, foiled by the marvels of the free market?

Not likely. The pushers would cut prices, making more money than ever from the ever-growing mass market. They would immediately increase the potency and variety beyond anything available at any government-approved narcotics counters.

Crime would increase. Crack produces paranoid violence. More permissiveness equals more use equals more violence.

And what will legalization do to the brains of Americans drawn into drug slavery by easy availability?



Earlier this year, an expert drug pediatrician told me that after only a few months babies born with crack addiction seemed to recover. Now we learn that stultifying behavioral effects last at least through early childhood. Will they last forever?

How long will crack affect neurological patterns in the brains of adult crack users? Dr. Gabriel G. Nahas of Columbia University argues in his new book, *Cocaine: The Great White Plague*, that the damage may be irreversible. Would it not be an act of simple intelligence to drop the legalization campaign until we find out?

Then why do a number of writers and academicians, left to right, support it? I have discussed this with antidrug leaders like Jesse Jackson, Dr. Mitchell Rosenthal of Phoenix House, and William J. Bennett, who search for answers themselves.

Perhaps the answer is that the legalizers are not dealing with reality in America. I think the reason has to do with class.

Crack is beginning to move into the white middle and upper classes. That is a tragedy for those addicted.

However, it has not yet destroyed the communities around which their lives revolve, not taken over every street and doorway. It has not passed generation to generation among them, killing the continuity of family.

But in ghetto communities poverty and drugs come together in a catalytic reaction that is reducing them to social rubble.

The antiabolitionists, virtually all white and well-to-do, do not see or do not care. Either way they show symptoms of the callousness of class. That can be a particularly dangerous social disorder. ■

## Questions for Analysis

1. Identify and rewrite the arguments that each of the authors uses to support his position regarding the legalization of drugs, using the following format:

*Reason:*

*Reason:*

*Conclusion:*

Use cue words to help you identify arguments.

2. Construct one new argument to support each side of this issue, using the form shown in question 1.
3. State whether or not you believe drugs should be legalized and provide reasons to support your conclusion. ◀

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## ARGUMENTS ARE INFERENCES

When you construct arguments, you are composing and relating the world by means of your ability to infer. As you saw in Chapter 9, *inferring* is a thinking process that you use to reason from what you already know (or believe to be the case) to new knowledge or beliefs. This is usually what you do when you construct arguments. You work from reasons you know or believe in to conclusions based on these reasons.

Just as you can use inferences to make sense of different types of situations, so you can also construct arguments for different purposes. In a variety of situations, you construct arguments to do the following:

- Decide
- Explain
- Predict
- Persuade

An example of each of these different types of arguments is given in the following sections. After examining each example, construct an argument of the same type related to issues in your own life.

### *We Construct Arguments to Decide*

**Reason:** Throughout my life, I've always been interested in all different kinds of electricity.

**Reason:** There are many attractive job opportunities in the field of electrical engineering.

**Conclusion:** I will work toward becoming an electrical engineer.

**Reason:**

**Reason:**

**Conclusion:**

### *We Construct Arguments to Explain*

**Reason:** I was delayed in leaving my house because my dog needed an emergency walking.

**Reason:** There was an unexpected traffic jam caused by motorists slowing down to view an overturned chicken truck.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, I was late for our appointment.

**Reason:**

**Reason:**

**Conclusion:**

### *We Construct Arguments to Predict*

**Reason:** Some people will always drive faster than the speed limit allows, no matter whether the limit is 55 or 65 mph.

**Reason:** Car accidents are more likely to occur at higher speeds.

**Conclusion:** It follows that the newly reinstated 65 mph limit will result in more accidents.

**Reason:**

**Reason:**

**Conclusion:**

### *We Construct Arguments to Persuade*

**Reason:** Chewing tobacco can lead to cancer of the mouth and throat.

**Reason:** Boys sometimes are led to begin chewing tobacco by ads for the product that feature sports heroes they admire.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, ads for chewing tobacco should be banned.

**Reason:**

**Reason:**

**Conclusion:**

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## EVALUATING ARGUMENTS

To construct an effective argument, you must be skilled in evaluating the effectiveness, or soundness, of arguments that have already been constructed. You must investigate two aspects of each argument independently to determine the soundness of the argument as a whole:

1. How true are the reasons being offered to support the conclusion?
2. To what extent do the reasons support the conclusion, or to what extent does the conclusion follow from the reasons offered?

We will first examine each of these ways of evaluating arguments separately and then see how they work together.

### *Truth: How True Are the Supporting Reasons?*

The first aspect of the argument you must evaluate is the truth of the reasons that are being used to support a conclusion. Does each reason make sense? What evidence is being offered as part of each reason? Do you know each reason to be true based on your experience? Is each reason based on a source that can be trusted? You use these questions and others like them to analyze the reasons offered and to determine how true they are. As you saw in Chapter 5, “Believing and Knowing,” evaluating the sort of beliefs usually found as reasons in arguments is a complex and ongoing challenge. Let us evaluate the truth of the reasons presented in the discussion at the beginning of this chapter about whether marijuana should be legalized.

#### Argument 1

**Reason:** Possessing marijuana is not a serious offense.

**Evaluation:** As it stands, this reason needs further evidence to support it.

The major issue of the discussion is whether possessing (and using) marijuana is in fact a serious offense or no offense at all. This reason would be strengthened by stating: “Possessing marijuana is not as serious an offense as armed robbery, rape, and murder, according to the overwhelming majority of legal statutes and judicial decisions.”

**Reason:** There are many other more serious offenses—such as armed robbery, rape, and murder—for which criminals don’t receive such stiff sentences.

**Evaluation:** The accuracy of this reason is highly doubtful. It is true that there is wide variation in the sentences handed down for the same offense. The sentences vary from state to state and also vary within states and even within the same court. Nevertheless, on the whole, serious offenses like armed robbery, rape, and murder do receive long prison sentences.

The real point here is that a fifteen-year sentence for possessing marijuana is extremely unusual when compared with other sentences for marijuana possession.



### Argument 2

**Reason:** Drugs pose a very serious threat to the young people of our country.

**Evaluation:** As the later discussion points out, this statement is much too vague. "Drugs" cannot be treated as being all the same. Some drugs (such as aspirin) are beneficial, while other drugs (such as heroin) are highly dangerous. To strengthen this reason, we would have to be more specific, stating, "Drugs like heroin, amphetamines, and cocaine pose a very serious threat to the young people of our country." We could increase the accuracy of the reason even more by adding the qualification "*some* of the young people of our country" because many young people are not involved with dangerous drugs.

**Reason:** Many crimes are committed to support drug habits.

**Evaluation:**

### Argument 3

**Reason:** It's not right to punish someone unfairly just to provide an example.

**Evaluation:** This reason raises an interesting and complex ethical question that has been debated for centuries. The political theorist Machiavelli stated that "The ends justify the means," which implies that if we bring about desirable results it does not matter how we go about doing so. He would therefore probably disagree with this reason, since using someone as an example might bring about desirable results, even though it might be personally unfair to the person being used as an example. In our society, however, which is based on the idea of fairness under the law, most people would probably agree with this reason.

**Reason:** Smoking marijuana is nothing like using drugs such as heroin or even cocaine.

**Evaluation:**

## THINKING ACTIVITY 10.2 EVALUATING THE TRUTH OF REASONS



Review the other arguments from the discussion on marijuana that you identified in Thinking Activity 10.1 (page 401). Evaluate the truth of each of the reasons contained in the arguments. ◀

### *Validity: Do the Reasons Support the Conclusion?*

In addition to determining whether the reasons are true, evaluating arguments involves investigating the *relationship* between the reasons and the conclusion. When the reasons support the conclusion so that the conclusion follows from the reasons being offered, the argument is *valid*.<sup>\*</sup> If, however, the reasons do *not* support the conclusion so that the conclusion does *not* follow from the reasons being offered, the argument is *invalid*.

<b>Valid Argument</b>	An argument in which the reasons support the conclusion so that the conclusion follows from the reasons offered
<b>Invalid Argument</b>	An argument in which the reasons do not support the conclusion so that the conclusion does <i>not</i> follow from the reasons offered

One way to focus on the concept of validity is to *assume* that all the reasons in the argument are true and then try to determine how probable they make the conclusion.

The following is an example of one type of valid argument:

**Reason:** Anything that is a threat to our health should not be legal.

**Reason:** Marijuana is a threat to our health.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, marijuana should not be legal.

This is a valid argument because if we assume that the reasons are true, then the conclusion necessarily follows. Of course, we may not agree that either or both of the reasons are true and thus not agree with the conclusion. Nevertheless, the *structure* of the argument is valid. This particular form of thinking is known as *deduction*, and we will examine deductive reasoning more closely in the pages ahead.

The following is a different type of argument:

<sup>\*</sup> In formal logic, the term *validity* is reserved for deductively valid arguments in which the conclusions follow necessarily from the premises. (See the discussion of deductive arguments later in this chapter.)

**Reason:** As part of a project in my social science class, we selected 100 students in the school to be interviewed. We took special steps to ensure that these students were representative of the student body as a whole (total students: 4,386). We asked the selected students whether they thought the United States should actively try to overthrow foreign governments that the United States disapproves of. Of the 100 students interviewed, 88 students said the United States should definitely *not* be involved in such activities.

**Conclusion:** We can conclude that most students in the school believe the United States should not be engaged in attempts to actively overthrow foreign governments that the United States disapproves of.

This is a persuasive argument because if we assume that the reason is true, then it provides strong support for the conclusion. In this case, the key part of the reason is the statement that the 100 students selected were representative of the entire 4,386 students at the school. To evaluate the truth of the reason, we might want to investigate the procedure used to select the 100 students to determine whether this sample was in fact representative of all the students. This particular form of thinking is an example of *induction*, and we will explore inductive reasoning more fully in Chapter 11, “Reasoning Critically.”

The following argument is an example of an invalid argument:

**Reason:** Bill Clinton believes that the Stealth Bomber should be built to ensure America’s national defense, providing the capability of undetected bombing attacks.

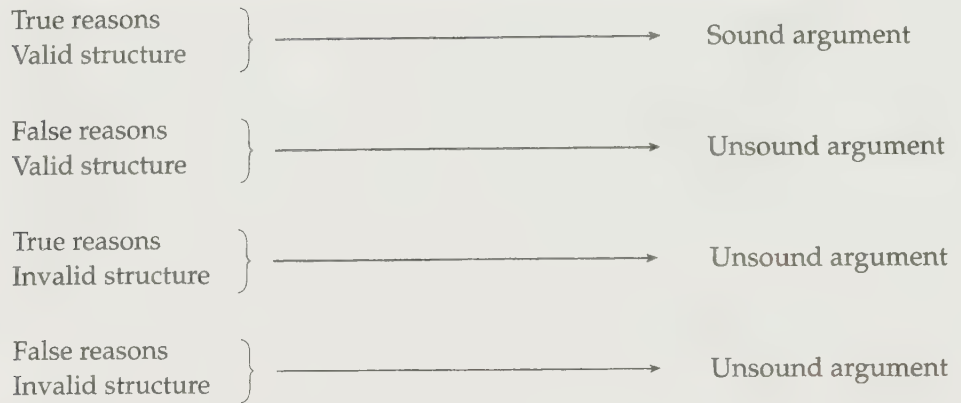
**Reason:** Bill Clinton is the president of the United States.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, the Stealth Bomber should be built.

This argument is *not* valid because even if we assume that the reasons are true, the conclusion does not follow. Although Bill Clinton is the president of the United States, the fact does not give him any special expertise on the subject of sophisticated radar designs for weapon systems. Indeed, this is a subject of such complexity and global significance that it should not be based on any one person’s opinion, no matter who that person is. This form of invalid thinking is a type of *fallacy*, and we will investigate fallacious reasoning in Chapter 11.

## *The Soundness of Arguments*

When an argument includes both true reasons and a valid structure, the argument is considered to be *sound*. When an argument has either false reasons or an invalid structure, however, the argument is considered to be *unsound*.



From this chart, we can see that, in terms of arguments, “truth” and “validity” are not the same concepts. An argument can have true reasons and an invalid structure or false reasons and a valid structure. In both cases the argument is *unsound*. To be sound, an argument must have *both* true reasons and a valid structure. For example, consider the following argument:

**Reason:** For a democracy to function most effectively, the citizens should be able to think critically about the important social and political issues.

**Reason:** Education plays a key role in developing critical thinking abilities.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, education plays a key role in ensuring that a democracy is functioning most effectively.

A good case could be made for the soundness of this argument because the reasons are persuasive and the argument structure is valid. Of course, someone might contend that one or both of the reasons are not completely true, which illustrates an important point about the arguments we construct and evaluate. Many of the arguments we encounter in life fall somewhere between complete soundness and complete unsoundness because we are often not sure if our reasons are completely true. Throughout this book we have found that developing accurate beliefs is an ongoing process and that our beliefs are subject to clarification and revision. As a result, the conclusion of any argument can be only as certain as the reasons supporting the conclusion.

To sum up, evaluating arguments effectively involves both the truth of the reasons and the validity of the argument’s structure. The degree of soundness an argument has depends on how accurate our reasons turn out to be and how valid the argument’s structure is.



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## FORMS OF ARGUMENTS

We use a number of basic argument forms to organize, relate, and make sense of the world. As already noted, two of the major types of argument forms are *deductive arguments* and *inductive arguments*. In the remainder of this chapter, we will explore various types of deductive arguments, reserving our analysis of inductive arguments for Chapter 11.

### *Deductive Arguments*

The deductive argument is the one most commonly associated with the study of logic. Though it has a variety of valid forms, they all share one characteristic: If you accept the supporting reasons (also called *premises*) as true, then you must necessarily accept the conclusion as true.

<b>Deductive Argument</b>	An argument form in which one reasons from premises that are known or assumed to be true to a conclusion that follows necessarily from these premises
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For example, consider the following famous deductive argument:

**Reason/Premise:** All men are mortal.

**Reason/Premise:** Socrates is a man.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

In this example of deductive thinking, accepting the premises of the argument as true means that the conclusion necessarily follows; it cannot be false. Many deductive arguments, like the one just given, are structured as *syllogisms*, an argument form that consists of two supporting premises and a conclusion. There are also, however, a large number of *invalid* deductive forms, one of which is illustrated in the following syllogism:

**Reason/Premise:** All men are mortal.

**Reason/Premise:** Socrates is a man.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, all men are Socrates.



Deductive arguments *involve reasoning from general premises to specific conclusions*, while inductive arguments *involve reasoning from specific instances to general conclusions*.

In the next several pages, we will briefly examine some common valid deductive forms.

***Applying a General Rule*** Whenever we reason with the form illustrated by the valid Socrates syllogism, we are using the following argument structure:

***Premise:*** All A (men) are B (mortal).

***Premise:*** S is an A (Socrates is a man).

***Conclusion:*** Therefore, S is B (Socrates is mortal).

This basic argument form is valid no matter what terms are included. For example:

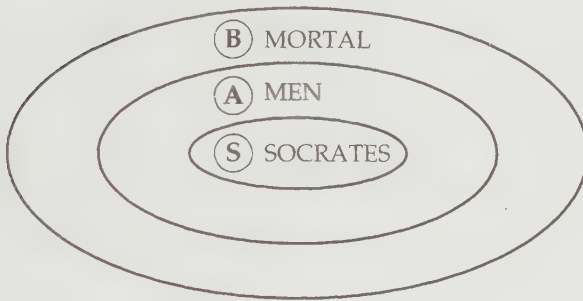
**Premise:** All politicians are untrustworthy.

**Premise:** Bill White is a politician.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, Bill White is untrustworthy.

Notice again that, with any valid deductive form, *if* we assume that the premises are true, then we must accept the conclusion. Of course, in this case there is considerable doubt that the first premise is actually true.

When we diagram this argument form, it becomes clear why it is a valid way of thinking:



The *first premise* states that classification *A* (men) falls within classification *B* (mortal).

The *second premise* states that *S* (Socrates) is a member of classification *A* (men).

The *conclusion* simply states what has now become obvious—namely, that *S* (Socrates) must fall within classification *B* (mortal).

Although we are usually not aware of it, we use this basic type of reasoning whenever we apply a general rule in the form *All A is B*. For instance:

**Premise:** All children eight years old should be in bed by 9:30 P.M.

**Premise:** You are an eight-year-old child.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, you should be in bed by 9:30 P.M.

Review the dialogue at the beginning of this chapter and see if you can identify a deductive argument that uses this form.

*Premise:*

*Premise:*

*Conclusion:*

Describe an example from your own experience in which you use this deductive form.

**Modus Ponens** Another valid deductive form that we commonly use in our thinking goes by the name *modus ponens*—that is, “affirming the antecedent”—and is illustrated in the following example:

*Premise:* If I have prepared thoroughly for the final exam, then I will do well.

*Premise:* I prepared thoroughly for the exam.

*Conclusion:* Therefore, I will do well on the exam.

When we reason like this, we are using the following argument structure:

*Premise:* If *A* (I have prepared thoroughly), then *B* (I will do well).

*Premise:* *A* (I have prepared thoroughly).

*Conclusion:* Therefore, *B* (I will do well).

Like all valid deductive forms, this form is valid no matter what specific terms are included. For example:

*Premise:* If the Democrats are able to register 20 million new voters, then they will win the presidential election.

*Premise:* The Democrats were able to register more than 20 million new voters.

*Conclusion:* Therefore, the Democrats will win the presidential election.

As with other valid argument forms, the conclusion will be true *if* the reasons are true. Although the second premise in this argument expresses information that can be verified, the first premise would be more difficult to establish.

Review the dialogue at the beginning of this chapter and see if you can identify any deductive arguments that use this form.

**Modus Tollens** A third commonly used valid deductive form has the name *modus tollens*—that is, “denying the consequence”—and is illustrated in the following example:

*Premise:* If Michael were a really good friend, he would lend me his car for the weekend.



**Premise:** Michael refuses to lend me his car for the weekend.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, Michael is not a really good friend.

When we reason in this fashion, we are using the following argument structure:

**Premise:** If *A* (Michael is a really good friend), then *B* (He will lend me his car).

**Premise:** Not *B* (He won't lend me his car).

**Conclusion:** Therefore, not *A* (He's not a really good friend).

Again, like other valid reasoning forms, this form is valid no matter what subject is being considered. For instance:

**Premise:** If Iraq were genuinely interested in world peace, it would not have invaded Kuwait.

**Premise:** Iraq did invade Kuwait (that is, Iraq did not "not invade" Kuwait).

**Conclusion:** Therefore, Iraq is not genuinely interested in world peace.

This conclusion—and any other conclusion produced by this form of reasoning—can be considered accurate if the reasons are true. In this case, the second premise would be easier to verify than the first.

Review the dialogue at the beginning of this chapter and see if you can identify any deductive arguments that use this reasoning form.

**Disjunctive Syllogism** A fourth common form of a valid deductive argument is known as a *disjunctive syllogism*. The term *disjunctive* means presenting several alternatives. This form is illustrated in the following example:

**Premise:** Either I left my wallet on my dresser or I have lost it.

**Premise:** The wallet is not on my dresser.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, I must have lost it.

When we reason in this way, we are using the following argument structure:

**Premise:** Either *A* (I left my wallet on my dresser) or *B* (I have lost it).

**Premise:** Not *A* (I didn't leave it on my dresser).

**Conclusion:** Therefore, *B* (I have lost it).

This valid reasoning form can be applied to any number of situations and still yield valid results. For example:

**Premise:** Either your stomach trouble is caused by what you are eating, or it is caused by nervous tension.

**Premise:** You tell me that you have been taking special care with your diet.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, your stomach trouble is caused by nervous tension.

To determine the accuracy of the conclusion, we must determine the accuracy of the premises. If they are true, then the conclusion must be true.

Review the dialogue at the beginning of this chapter and see if you can identify any deductive arguments that use this reasoning form.

All these basic argument forms—applying a general rule, *modus ponens*, *modus tollens*, and disjunctive syllogism—are found not only in informal, everyday conversations but also at more formal levels of thinking. They appear in academic disciplines, in scientific inquiry, in debates on social issues, and so on. Many other argument forms—both deductive and inductive—also constitute human reasoning. By sharpening your understanding of these ways of thinking, you will be better able to make sense of the world by constructing and evaluating effective arguments.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 10.3 *EVALUATING ARGUMENTS*



Analyze the following arguments by completing the following steps.

1. Summarize the reasons and conclusions given.
2. Identify which, if any, of the following deductive argument forms are used.
  - Applying a general rule
  - *Modus ponens* (affirming the antecedent)
  - *Modus tollens* (denying the consequence)
  - Disjunctive syllogism
3. Evaluate the truth of the reasons that support the conclusion.

For if the brain is a machine of ten billion nerve cells and the mind can somehow be explained as the summed activity of a finite number of chemical and electrical reactions, [then] boundaries limit the human prospect—we are biological and our souls cannot fly free.

—Edward O. Wilson, *On Human Nature*

The state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part.

—Aristotle, *Politics*

There now is sophisticated research that strongly suggests a deterrent effect [of capital punishment]. Furthermore, the principal argument against the deterrent effect is weak. The argument is that in most jurisdictions where capital punishment has been abolished there has been no immediate, sharp increase in what had been capital crimes. But in those jurisdictions, the actual act of abolition was an insignificant event because for years the death penalty had been imposed rarely, if at all. Common sense—which deserves deference until it is refuted—suggests that the fear of death can deter some premeditated crimes, including some murders.

—George F. Will, *Cleveland Plain-Dealer*, March 13, 1981

If the increased power which science has conferred upon human volitions is to be a boon and not a curse, the ends to which these volitions are directed must grow commensurately with the growth of power to carry them out. Hitherto, although we have been told on Sundays to love our neighbor, we have been told on weekdays to hate him, and there are six times as many weekdays as Sundays. Hitherto, the harm that we could do to our neighbor by hating him was limited by our incompetence, but in the new world upon which we are entering there will be no such limit, and the indulgence of hatred can lead only to ultimate and complete disaster.

—Bertrand Russell, "The Expanding Mental Universe"

The extreme vulnerability of a complex industrial society to intelligent, targeted terrorism by a very small number of people may prove the fatal challenge to which Western states have no adequate response. Counterforce alone will never suffice. The real challenge of the true terrorist is to the basic values of a society. If there is no commitment to shared values in Western society—and if none are imparted in our amoral institutions of higher learning—no increase in police and burglar alarms will suffice to preserve our society from the specter that haunts us—not a bomb from above but a gun from within.

—James Billington, "The Gun Within"

To fully believe in something, to truly understand something, one must be intimately acquainted with its opposite. One should not adopt a creed by default, because no alternative is known. Education should prepare students for the "real world" not by segregating them from evil but by urging full confrontation to test and modify the validity of the good.

—Robert Baron, "In Defense of 'Teaching' Racism, Sexism, and Fascism"

The inescapable conclusion is that society secretly *wants* crime, *needs* crime, and gains definite satisfactions from the present mishandling of it! We condemn crime; we punish offenders for it; but we need it. The crime and punishment ritual is a part of our lives. We need crimes to wonder at, to enjoy vicariously, to discuss and speculate about, and to publicly deplore. We need criminals to identify ourselves with, to envy secretly, and to punish stoutly. They do for us the forbidden, illegal things we *wish* to do and, like scapegoats of old, they bear the burdens of our displaced guilt and punishment—"the iniquities of us all."

—Karl Menninger, "The Crime of Punishment" ◀

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## COMPOSING AN ARGUMENTATIVE PAPER

The purpose of mastering the forms of argument is to become a sophisticated critical thinker who can present her or his ideas to others effectively. The art of discussing and debating ideas with others was explored in Chapter 2. We saw then that effective discussion involves

- Listening carefully to other points of view
- Supporting views with reasons and evidence
- Responding to the points being made
- Asking—and trying to answer—appropriate questions
- Working to increase understanding, not simply to "win the argument"

Although learning to discuss ideas with others in an organized, productive fashion is crucial for thinking critically, it is equally important to be able to present your ideas in written form. When you write your ideas, you are creating a record that can be shared with many people, not simply with those to whom you are speaking directly with. Also, in many academic and professional contexts, communicating ideas in writing is essential. Term papers, interoffice memos, research analyses, grant proposals, legal briefs, evaluation reports, and countless other situations that you are likely to encounter require that you develop the skills of clear, persuasive writing. Finally, composing your ideas develops your mind in distinctive, high-level ways. When you express your ideas in writing, you tend to organize them into more complex relationships, select your terms with more care, and revise your work after an initial draft. As a result, your writing is often a more articulate and comprehensive expression of your ideas than you could achieve in verbal discussions. And the process of expressing



your ideas in such a clear and coherent fashion has the simultaneous effect of sharpening your thinking. As you saw in Chapter 6, language and thinking are partners that work together to create meaning and communicate ideas. How well you perform one of these activities is directly related to how well you perform the other.

Learning to compose argumentative papers is one of the most important writing skills that you need to develop. Since an argument is a form of thinking in which you are trying to present reasons to support a conclusion, it is likely that much of your writing will fall into this category. Composing thoughtfully reasoned and clearly written papers is very challenging, and few people are able to do it well. In the same way that many discussions are illogical, disorganized, and overly emotional, much of argumentative writing is also ineffective. In this section, you will examine how to present your ideas in this essential form.

The papers that you will write in college and for many careers range from short one- to two-page papers to very elaborate research papers. Yet despite these different writing contexts, the basic stages in the writing process remain relatively constant.

- Generating ideas
- Defining a main idea
- Conducting research (for research papers)
- Organizing ideas
- Revising

## *Generating Ideas*

Ideas are not created in isolation but are almost always related to a particular subject. We develop ideas by exploring that subject. Some of the papers assigned to you will have very specific requirements, while others may be more open-ended. In most cases, however, you will be expected to come up with your own ideas. Even when the paper topic is fairly straightforward, you will be expected to bring your own individual perspective to the subject being explored. There are several strategies to help you generate ideas.

1. *Familiarize yourself with the subject.* There is no simple formula for developing original ideas for your writing assignments. However, the place to begin is by thoroughly immersing yourself in the subject and then letting your subconscious work on the project of making connections and generating creative ideas. In a way, developing creative ideas is like gardening: you

have to prepare the soil, plant the seeds, ensure that there is sufficient food, water, and sunlight—and then wait. Once the ideas begin to emerge, you have to be ready to seize on them. The creative process is a natural process that works according to its own schedule and rhythm. Familiarize yourself with the subject, allow time for “incubation,” and then be prepared to recognize and act on the ideas once they occur to you.

2. *Brainstorm.* Brainstorming is an activity in which, working individually or with a group of people, you write down as many ideas as you or the group can think of related to a given theme. The goal is to produce as many ideas as possible in a specified period of time. While you are engaged in this idea-generating process, it is important to relax, let your mind run free, build on the ideas of others, and refrain from censoring or evaluating any ideas produced, no matter how marginal they might seem at first. Brainstorming stimulates your creative juices, and you will be surprised at how many ideas you are able to come up with. And if you work with other people, you will be exposed to fresh perspectives and the synergy of people working together as a team.
3. *Create mind maps.* Mind maps are visual presentations of the various ways ideas can be related to one another. For example, each chapter in this book opens with a “mind map” that visually summarizes the chapter’s basic concepts as well as the way these concepts are related to each other. As you saw in Chapter 7, mind maps are an effective tool for taking notes on your reading assignments. However, using mind maps is also a powerful approach for writing, helping you generate ideas and begin organizing them into various relationships. Mind maps are well suited for the writing process for a number of reasons. First, the organization grows naturally, reflecting the way your mind naturally makes associations and organizes information. Second, the organization can be easily revised on the basis of new information and your developing understanding of how this information should be organized. Third, you can express a range of relationships among the various ideas. And instead of being identified once and then forgotten, each idea remains an active part of the overall pattern, suggesting new possible relationships. Fourth, you do not have to decide initially on a beginning, subpoints, subsubpoints, and so on; you can do this after your pattern is complete, saving time and frustration.

The best way to explore the process of generating ideas is to actually engage in it. Imagine that you are assigned the following topic for a research paper:

There are many problems that students face on college campuses. Identify one such problem and then write a research paper that analyzes the causes of and possible solutions to the problem. Why does the problem occur, and what can be done to deal with it? Your paper should include relevant research findings as well as your own perspective on this problem.

Using the brainstorming strategy with a friend, you might come up with a list that includes the following student problems on your campus:

parking	poor quality of campus food
cafeteria too noisy	classes too large
library closes too early	no comfortable places to study
racial tensions	date rape
abuse of alcohol	use of other drugs
registration is a nightmare	tests and papers come in clumps
not enough social activities	some teachers just lecture
thefts are increasing	books are too expensive
not sufficient financial aid	the curriculum is not well organized

Can you identify additional problems faced by students on your campus?

### *Defining a Main Idea*

After you have generated possible ideas for your paper, your next step is to define a working main idea suggested by the information and ideas you have been considering. Once selected, your main idea—known as a thesis—will act to focus your thinking on a central theme. It will also guide your future explorations and suggest new ideas and other relationships. Of course, a variety of main ideas can usually develop out of any particular situation. And your initial working idea will probably need redefining as you explore your material further. Looking over the preceding example, you might feel that some of the topics are not significant enough for a substantive paper—for example, “the poor quality of campus food.” On the other hand, some topics might seem to be too large and complex—for example, “the curriculum is not well organized.” It is also important to select a topic which you find compelling, as people perform better when they are actively engaged in the issues they are investigating. In this case let’s assume you decide to select “abuse of alcohol” as your topic.

Once identified, your topic will need to be defined. There are many different ways you can approach a topic like “abuse of alcohol,” and you need to specify the one you want to take. Since this is an argumentative paper, you need to develop at least two contrasting perspectives on your topic. Creating mind maps is a very useful strategy to use in this stage of the writing process. A sample mind map for the topic of “abuse of alcohol” appears on page 425.

### *Conducting Research*

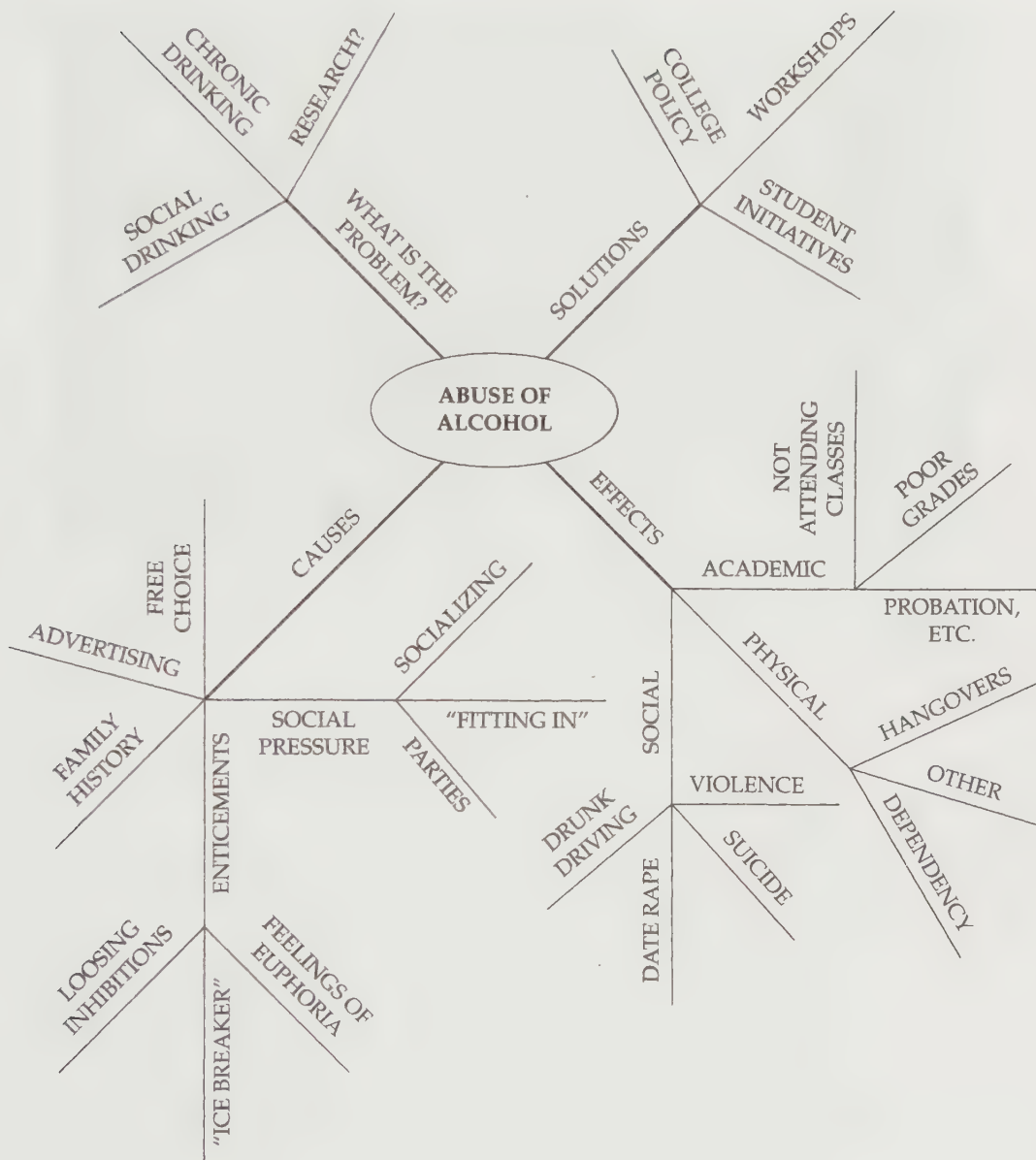
Research papers are more elaborate versions of the standard papers that are typically assigned. In writing a research paper, you will be using the same approach to the composing process and writing papers that we just explored. The difference is that research papers involve gathering relevant information from appropriate sources, integrating this information into your paper, and then documenting your sources with footnotes and a bibliography. Most professors who assign research papers will expect you to bring your perspective to the subject: it’s just that you are also expected to support your point of view with factual information and evidence drawn from authoritative sources.

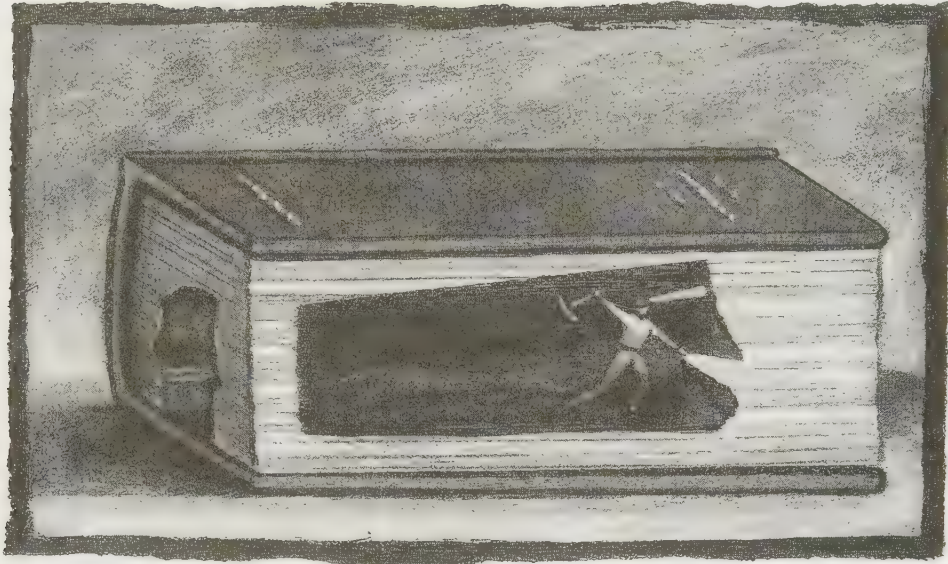
Sometimes students writing research papers make the mistake of simply reporting the information from research sources, excluding their own perspective entirely. At other times students make the opposite mistake, including mainly their own ideas with little support from research sources. A properly balanced research paper integrates both.

*Research Sources* Once you have defined your main idea, you should proceed to the library for your research. You can spend anywhere from a few hours to a few days in the library, depending on how familiar you are with library resources. The research sources that you are looking for will be contained in books, newspaper articles, and scholarly journal articles. All of these sources have their own indexes that will help you track down the information needed.

- *Encyclopedias:* Depending on your topic, encyclopedias can be a useful place to begin your investigations, serving as a launching pad for more extensive research. In libraries, bound encyclopedias are being replaced by computerized CD-ROM versions, including ones like *Encarta* and *Grolier Encyclopedia*. These computerized versions make searching for information simple, as they have many illustrations and even animated sequences, and you can print out useful information and thus avoid taking notes or standing in line at the copier.







*Composing informed argumentative papers involves researching relevant information from authoritative sources and integrating this information into the paper in appropriate ways.*

- *Card catalogs:* This is the basic index system of the library, referencing the collection of books by author, subject, and title. Most traditional index cards have been replaced by computerized versions.
- *Periodical indexes:* The term *periodicals* refers to magazines and journals that are published at regular intervals. In addition to common magazines like *Time* and *Newsweek*, there are many “scholarly” journals that contain articles and research findings in all the major fields of human inquiry. Periodical indexes are both bound—like the *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature*—and computerized. You will also find that in addition to general indexes, there are indexes relating to specific fields, such as the *Social Science Index*. These indexes are usually organized by subject, although you may have to use a number of variations on your topic to ensure that you are locating all of the appropriate references. For example, in looking for information about college drinking, you will likely have to explore a number of different subjects such as “college life” and “alcohol drinking.” The computerized indexes enable you to conduct these searches with great ease by using the “Key Word search” and the “Boolean search,” which enables you to combine several key words, like “college” and “drinking.”

- *Newspaper indexes:* A number of the larger newspapers, like the *New York Times*, have their own indexes.

**Research Notes** Once you collect a listing of potential references that you think look promising, the next step is to investigate. Although you will find bound copies of the major periodicals, many of your sources will be available only on microfilm or microfiche, so you will have to become familiar with using this technology. The newer machines also give you the means to make copies of the articles while you are viewing them (for a price, of course!). If you're not making a copy, you should make out a 4x6 index card that contains the title, author, publishing information, and your notes detailing the important information contained on it. Using index cards will give you flexibility when you are organizing and writing your paper. A sample note card is pictured next.

"Bad Times at Hangover U"
Debra Rosenberg <u>Newsweek</u> 11/19/90 Pg 81
At Boston College, the number of students hospitalized for alcohol related problems has doubled.
At U Mass, 80% of weekend visits to health services are alcohol related.
Study of 1,600 freshmen by Harvard School of Public Health found that among those who drink at least once a week, 92% men and 82% women consume at least 5 drinks in a row. 50% said they wanted to get drunk.

After you have gathered what seems to be enough information (you may need to go back for additional research once you begin writing the paper), you need to organize your ideas and start writing. When the ideas, research, or information that you are expressing is based on one of your sources, you need to reference that source with a footnote or a citation right in the body of the text. Your teacher will likely provide guidelines. If you are expressing the information in the exact words of the author, then you need to use quotation marks. Students sometimes commit plagiarism by not providing sufficient credit with citations and quotation marks. This sort of "idea stealing" is a primary sin in

academic writing, whether the theft is intentional or not, and you should avoid anything close to it. If in doubt, give credit.

## *Organizing Ideas*

Argumentative papers generally include three essential elements:

- Defending the main idea
- Refuting the opposing view(s)
- Reaching a conclusion or proposing a solution

Just as the same ingredients can be combined in different amounts to create varying recipes, these elements can be organized in a variety of different ways. For example, here are some possible organizations:

1. Your paper can focus on the viability of your main idea, emphasizing the supporting reasons and evidence and providing modest treatment of opposing views.
2. Your paper can focus on key issues one at a time, supporting your view and refuting opposing views in each instance.
3. Your paper can focus on the inadequacy of the opposing views, identifying each weakness and explaining why your view is superior.
4. Your paper can take a balanced approach, examining various perspectives in an objective and evenhanded fashion, and then ending with your own conclusion and solution.

In the case of dealing with the topic “abuse of alcohol,” let’s suppose you discover that in conducting your research there seem to be a number of legitimate perspectives on this complex problem. As a result, instead of emphasizing the pro/con, adversarial approach evident in organizations 1, 2, and 3, you decide to use organization 4, leading you to the following format:

- Part 1: one perspective on this problem, supported by appropriate research
- Part 2: a contrasting perspective on this problem, supported by relevant research
- Part 3: your own well-reasoned perspective, including what approaches might be effective in addressing the problem

A sample draft of the paper on student drinking follows.



### Critical Thinking About Uncritical Drinking

There is widespread agreement that excessive student drinking is a serious problem on many college campuses. However, there are different views on the causes of this problem and the best solutions for dealing with it. In this paper I will present two contrasting perspectives on the problem of student drinking and conclude with my own analysis of how best to deal with this serious threat to student health and success.

#### Perspective 1:

Why do college students drink to excess? According to many experts it is mainly due to the influence of the people around them. When most students enter college, they do not have a drinking problem. However, although few realize it, these unwary people are entering a culture in which alcohol is often the drug of choice. It is a drug that can easily destroy their lives. According to some estimates, between 80 percent and 90 percent of the students on many campuses drink alcohol (1). Many of these students are heavy drinkers (2). One study found that nearly 30 percent of university students are heavy drinkers, consuming more than 15 alcoholic drinks a week (3). Another study found that among those who drink at least once a week, 92 percent of the men and 82 percent of the women consume at least five drinks in a row, and half said they wanted to get drunk (4). The results of all this drinking are predictably deadly. Virtually all college administrators agree that alcohol is the most widely used drug among college students and that its abuse is directly related to emotional problems and violent behavior, ranging from date rape to death (5), (6). For example, at one university, a 20-year-old woman became drunk at a fraternity party and fell to her death from the third floor

(7). At another university, two students were killed in a drunk-driving accident after drinking alcohol at an off-campus fraternity house. The families of both students have filed lawsuits against the fraternity (8). When students enter a college or university, they soon become socialized into the alcohol-sodden culture of “higher education,” typically at formal and informal parties. The influence of peer pressure is enormous. When your friends and fellow students are encouraging you to drink, it is extremely difficult to resist giving in to these pressures.

#### Perspective 2:

Other experts believe that although peer pressure is certainly a factor in excessive college drinking, it is only one of a number of factors. They point out that the misuse of alcohol is a problem for all youth in our society, not just college students. For example, a recent study by the surgeon general’s office shows that 1 in 3 teenagers consumes alcohol every week. This is an abuse that leads to traffic deaths, academic difficulties, and acts of violence (9). Another study based on a large, nationally representative sample indicates that although college students are more likely to use alcohol, they tend to drink less quantity per drinking day than nonstudents of the same age (10). In other words, college students are more social drinkers than problem drinkers. Another sample of undergraduate students found that college drinking is not as widespread as many people think (11). The clear conclusion is that although drinking certainly takes place on college campuses, it is no greater a problem than in the population at large. What causes the misuse of alcohol? Well, certainly the influence of friends, whether in college or out, plays a role. But it is not the only factor. To begin with, there is evidence that family history is related to alcohol abuse. For example, one survey of college students found greater problem drinking among stu-

dents whose parent or grandparent had been diagnosed (or treated) for alcoholism (12). Another study found that college students who come from families with high degrees of conflict display a greater potential for alcoholism (13). Another important factor in the misuse of alcohol by young people is advertising. A recent article entitled "It Isn't Miller Time Yet, and This Bud's Not for You" underscores the influence advertisers exert on the behavior of our youth (14). By portraying beer drinkers as healthy, fun-loving, attractive young people, they create role models that many youths imitate. In the same way that cigarette advertisers used to encourage smoking among our youth—without regard to the health hazards—so alcohol advertisers try to sell as much booze as they can to whoever will buy it—no matter what the consequences. A final factor in the abuse of alcohol is the people themselves. Although young people are subject to a huge number of influences, in the final analysis, they are free to choose what they want to do. They don't have to drink, no matter what the social pressures. In fact, many students resist these pressures and choose not to drink excessively or at all. In short, some students choose to think critically, while others choose to drink uncritically.

### Part 3: My Perspective

In my opinion, both of these perspectives on excessive drinking on college campuses have merit. I believe that there are a complex variety of factors that are responsible for this problem, and the specific explanation varies from context to context, and individual to individual. With this in mind, I believe that there are a number of strategies that would be effective in solving this problem.

(1) Colleges should create orientation and education programs aimed at preventing alcohol abuse, and colleges

should give campaigns against underage drinking top priority.

(2) Advertising and promotion of alcoholic beverages on college campuses and in college publications should be banned. Restrictions should be imposed on liquor distributors that sponsor campus events. In addition, alcohol beverage companies should be petitioned not to target young people in their ads.

(3) Students at residential colleges should be able to live in "substance free" housing, offering them a voluntary haven from drugs, alcohol, and peer pressure.

(4) Colleges should ban or tightly restrict alcohol use on campus, and include stiffer penalties for students who violate the rules.

(5) Colleges should create alcohol-free clubs to combat alcohol abuse and find alternatives for students who are under 21.

(6) The drinking age should be reduced to 18, so that students won't be forced to move parties off-campus. At off-campus parties there is no college control, and as a result students tend to drink greater quantities and more dangerous concoctions like spiked alcohol.

(7) Colleges should ban the use of beer kegs, the symbol of cheap and easy availability of alcohol.

(8) Fraternities should eliminate pledging in order to stop alcohol abuse and hazing.

In conclusion, I believe that alcohol abuse on college campuses is an extremely important problem that is threatening the health and college careers of many students. As challenging as this problem is, I believe that it is a problem that can be solved if students, teachers, and college officials work together in harmony and with determination.



1. *Chronicle of Higher Education*: Jan 17/90; pp A33–A35
2. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*: Nov/90
3. *Chronicle of Higher Education*: April 12/89; p A43
4. *Newsweek*: Nov 19/90; p 81
5. *Chronicle of Higher Education*: Jan 17/90; pp A33, 35
6. *Chronicle of Higher Education*: Jan 31/90; pp A33–35
7. *Chronicle of Higher Education*: Jan 31/90; p 3
8. *Chronicle of Higher Education*: June 12/91; pp A29–30
9. *Time*: Dec 16/91; p 64
10. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*: Vol: 52 Iss: 1 Jan/91
11. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*: Vol: 51 Iss: 6 Nov/90
12. *Journal of Counseling and Development*: Vol: 69 Jan/91 pp 237–40
13. *Adolescence*: Vol: 26 Iss: 102 Summer/91 pp 341–47
14. *Business Week*: June 24/91 p 52

Note the numbers in parentheses used in this essay. Each number (known as a *callout*) directs the reader to a note that credits the source of either the information used or the language quoted. If the writer is using a footnote style, each note would appear at the bottom of the page on which it is called out. In endnote style, the notes are listed together, in order, after the conclusion of the essay. However, some documentation methods use parenthetical style, in which each source is credited in parentheses directly after it is used. Whatever style of documentation is used, the last element of the essay will be the bibliography, or reference list. Here, all sources are listed alphabetically. The difference between a note and a reference citation is that the note contains specific information (such as the exact page that was used for a quotation) and the reference citation includes complete information about the source: page range, place of publication, etc.

## Revising

This book emphasizes that thinking is an interactive process, constantly moving back and forth among various activities in order to make sense of things—forming and applying concepts, defining and exemplifying key terms, generating and developing ideas. This same interactive process is part of the writing process. Most writers find it natural to move back and forth among the various aspects of the writing process as they follow out the line of their thinking. In fact, you will probably discover that the process of writing does not

merely express your thinking; it also *stimulates* your thoughts, bringing new ideas and ways to explore them to the surface.

Because thinking and writing are interactive, in a sense you are continually revising your thinking and writing. The first draft of your writing is usually just that—a first draft. Having expressed your thinking in language, it is important to go back and “re-see” (the origin of the word *revise*) your writing from a fresh perspective. In addition, it is helpful to have others read what you have written and give their reactions.

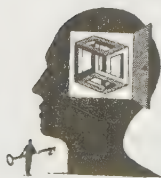
Improving sentence structure and correcting spelling and punctuation are, of course, part of the revising process. However, you also want to take a fresh look at the *thinking* that is being expressed. One useful strategy is to create an outline or map of the first draft because it will enable you to identify the main ideas and express their relationships. This, in turn, may suggest ways you can clarify your thinking by rearranging different parts, developing certain points further, or deleting what is repetitious or not central to the main ideas of the paper.

After completing a draft of your essay, you should review how you have developed and organized your ideas and information by following these steps:

### REVISION STEPS

1. Create a map that expresses the main points being considered in your paper and their various relationships.
2. Examine your map carefully, looking for ways to clarify and improve your ideas. Determine whether you should
  - Rearrange the sequence of your ideas
  - Develop certain ideas further
  - Delete points that are repetitious or not central to the subjectRevise your map (or create a new one to reflect these changes).
3. Compose a revised draft of your paper, using your revision map as a guide.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 10.4 COMPOSING AN ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY



Select a current issue of interest to you. (Possible choices are animal rights, mandatory AIDS testing, and so on.) Following the guidelines in this section, construct an argumentative essay that explores the issue by

- Generating ideas
- Defining a main idea

- Conducting research (*Locate at least two articles about the issue you have selected and use them as resources.*)
- Organizing ideas (*List arguments on both sides of the issue, organizing them into premises and conclusions. Make notes evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each argument. Identify the most important arguments and make an outline.*)
- Revising

Before composing your essay, examine the two sets of argumentative essays included in this chapter on legalizing drugs (page 402) and on the death penalty (page 436). Note how each author organizes the essay and examine the types of arguments used. Your essay should begin with a paragraph that introduces the issue and should end with a paragraph that sums up and concludes it. ◀

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## SUMMARY

In this chapter we have focused mainly on deductive arguments, an argument form in which it is claimed that the premises constitute conclusive evidence for the truth of the conclusion. In a correct deductive argument, which is organized into a valid deductive form, if the premises are true, the conclusion must be true; it cannot be false.

Although *deductive* forms of reasoning are crucial to our understanding the world and making informed decisions, much of our reasoning is *nondeductive*. The various *nondeductive* argument forms are typically included under the general category of *inductive* reasoning. In contrast to deductive arguments, inductive arguments rarely provide conclusions that are totally certain. The premises offer evidence in support of the conclusion, but the conclusion does not follow necessarily from the premises.

We will explore the area of inductive reasoning more fully in the next chapter, "Reasoning Critically."

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## THINKING PASSAGES THE DEATH PENALTY: PRO AND CON



The following articles present two opposing sets of arguments regarding capital punishment. The first article, written by former New York City Mayor Edward I. Koch, gives reasons for supporting capital punishment. The second article, written by South Carolina attorney David Bruck (who defended Susan Smith, the South Carolina woman convicted of drowning her two

children), gives reasons for opposing capital punishment. Read the articles and complete the activities that follow.

### DEATH AND JUSTICE: HOW CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AFFIRMS LIFE

by Edward I. Koch

Last December a man named Robert Lee Willie, who had been convicted of raping and murdering an 18-year-old woman, was executed in the Louisiana state prison. In a statement issued several minutes before his death, Mr. Willie said: "Killing people is wrong. . . . It makes no difference whether it's citizens, countries, or governments. Killing is wrong." Two weeks later in South Carolina, an admitted killer named Joseph Carl Shaw was put to death for murdering two teenagers. In an appeal to the governor for clemency, Mr. Shaw wrote: "Killing is wrong when I did it. Killing is wrong when you do it. I hope you have the courage and moral strength to stop the killing."

It is a curiosity of modern life that we find ourselves being lectured on morality by cold-blooded killers. Mr. Willie previously had been convicted of aggravated rape, aggravated kidnapping, and the murders of a Louisiana deputy and a man from Missouri. Mr. Shaw committed another murder a week before the two for which he was executed, and admitted mutilating the body of the 14-year-old girl he killed. I can't help wondering what prompted these murderers to speak out against killing as they entered the deathhouse door. Did their newfound reverence for life stem from the realization that they were about to lose their own?

Life is indeed precious, and I believe the death penalty helps to affirm this fact. Had the death penalty been a real possibility in the minds of these murderers, they might well have stayed their hand. They might have shown moral awareness before their victims died, and not after. Consider the tragic death of Rosa Velez, who happened to be home when a man named Luis Vera burglarized her apartment in Brooklyn. "Yeah, I shot her," Vera admitted. "She knew me, and I knew I wouldn't go to the chair."

During my twenty-two years in public service, I have heard the pros and cons of capital punishment expressed with special intensity. As a district leader, councilman, congressman, and mayor, I have represented constituencies generally thought of as liberal. Because I support the death penalty for heinous crimes of murder, I have sometimes been the subject of emotional and outraged attacks by voters who find my position reprehensible or worse. I have listened to their ideas. I have weighed their objections carefully. I still support the death penalty. The reasons I maintain



my position can be best understood by examining the arguments most frequently heard in opposition.

1. *The death penalty is "barbaric."* Sometimes opponents of capital punishment horrify with tales of lingering death on the gallows, of faulty electric chairs, or of agony in the gas chamber. Partly in response to such protests, several states such as North Carolina and Texas switched to execution by lethal injection. The condemned person is put to death painlessly, without ropes, voltage, bullets, or gas. Did this answer the objections of death penalty opponents? Of course not. On June 22, 1984, the *New York Times* published an editorial that sarcastically attacked the new "hygienic" method of death by injection, and stated that "execution can never be made humane through science." So it's not the method that really troubles opponents. It's the death itself they consider barbaric.

Admittedly, capital punishment is not a pleasant topic. However, one does not have to like the death penalty in order to support it any more than one must like radical surgery, radiation, or chemotherapy in order to find necessary these attempts at curing cancer. Ultimately we may learn how to cure cancer with a simple pill. Unfortunately, that day has not yet arrived. Today we are faced with the choice of letting the cancer spread or trying to cure it with the methods available, methods that one day will almost certainly be considered barbaric. But to give up and do nothing would be far more barbaric and would certainly delay the discovery of an eventual cure. The analogy between cancer and murder is imperfect, because murder is not the "disease" we are trying to cure. The disease is injustice. We may not like the death penalty, but it must be available to punish crimes of cold-blooded murder, cases in which any other form of punishment would be inadequate and, therefore, unjust. If we create a society in which injustice is not tolerated, incidents of murder—the most flagrant form of injustice—will diminish.

2. *No other major democracy uses the death penalty.* No other major democracy—in fact, few other countries of any description—are plagued by a murder rate such as that in the United States. Fewer and fewer Americans can remember the days when unlocked doors were the norm and murder was a rare and terrible offense. In America the murder rate climbed 122 percent between 1963 and 1980. During that same period, the murder rate in New York City increased by almost 400 percent, and the statistics are even worse in many other cities. A study at M.I.T. showed that based on 1970 homicide rates a person who lived in a large American city ran a

greater risk of being murdered than an American soldier in World War II ran of being killed in combat. It is not surprising that the laws of each country differ according to differing conditions and traditions. If other countries had our murder problem, the cry for capital punishment would be just as loud as it is here. And I dare say that any other major democracy where 75 percent of the people supported the death penalty would soon enact it into law.

3. *(An innocent person might be executed by mistake.)* Consider the work of Hugo Adam Bedau, one of the most implacable foes of capital punishment in this country. According to Mr. Bedau, it is “false sentimentality to argue that the death penalty should be abolished because of the abstract possibility that an innocent person might be executed.” He cites a study of the 7,000 executions in this country from 1893 to 1971, and concludes that the record fails to show that such cases occur. The main point, however, is this. If government functioned only when the possibility of error didn’t exist, government wouldn’t function at all. Human life deserves special protection, and one of the best ways to guarantee that protection is to assure that convicted murderers do not kill again. Only the death penalty can accomplish this end. In a recent case in New Jersey, a man named Richard Biegenwald was freed from prison after serving 18 years for murder; since his release he has been convicted of committing four murders. A prisoner named Lemuel Smith, who, while serving four life sentences for murder (plus two life sentences for kidnapping and robbery) in New York’s Green Haven Prison, lured a woman corrections officer into the chaplain’s office and strangled her. He then mutilated and dismembered her body. An additional life sentence for Smith is meaningless. Because New York has no death penalty statute, Smith has effectively been given a license to kill.

But the problem of multiple murder is not confined to the nation’s penitentiaries. In 1982, 91 police officers were killed in the line of duty in this country. Seven percent of those arrested in the cases that have been solved had a previous arrest for murder. In New York City in 1976 and 1977, 85 persons arrested for homicide had a previous arrest for murder. Six of these individuals had two previous arrests for murder, and one had four previous murder arrests. During those two years the New York police were arresting for murder persons with a previous arrest for murder on the average of one every 8.5 days. This is not surprising when we learn that in 1975, for example, the median time served in Massachusetts for

homicide was less than two and a half years. In 1976 a study sponsored by the Twentieth Century Fund found that the average time served in the United States for first-degree murder is ten years. The median time served may be considerably lower.

4. (*Capital punishment cheapens the value of human life.*) On the contrary, it can be easily demonstrated that the death penalty strengthens the value of human life. If the penalty for rape were lowered, clearly it would signal a lessened regard for the victims' suffering, humiliation, and personal integrity. It would cheapen their horrible experience, and expose them to an increased danger of recurrence. When we lower the penalty for murder, it signals a lessened regard for the value of the victim's life. Some critics of capital punishment, such as columnist Jimmy Breslin, have suggested that a life sentence is actually a harsher penalty for murder than death. This is sophistic nonsense. A few killers may decide not to appeal a death sentence, but the overwhelming majority make every effort to stay alive. It is by exacting the highest penalty for the taking of human life that we affirm the highest value of human life.

5. (*The death penalty is applied in a discriminatory manner.*) This factor no longer seems to be the problem it once was. The appeals process for a condemned prisoner is lengthy and painstaking. Every effort is made to see that the verdict and sentence were fairly arrived at. However, assertions of discrimination are not an argument for ending the death penalty but for extending it. It is not justice to exclude everyone from the penalty of the law if a few are found to be so favored. Justice requires that the law be applied equally to all.

6. (*Thou Shalt Not Kill.*) The Bible is our greatest source of moral inspiration. Opponents of the death penalty frequently cite the sixth of the Ten Commandments in an attempt to prove that capital punishment is divinely proscribed. In the original Hebrew, however, the Sixth Commandment reads "Thou Shalt Not Commit Murder," and the Torah specifies capital punishment for a variety of offenses. The biblical viewpoint has been upheld by philosophers throughout history. The greatest thinkers of the 19th century—Kant, Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Mill—agreed that natural law properly authorizes the sovereign to take life in order to vindicate justice. Only Jeremy Bentham was ambivalent. Washington,

Jefferson, and Franklin endorsed it. Abraham Lincoln authorized executions for deserters in wartime. Alexis de Tocqueville, who expressed profound respect for American institutions, believed that the death penalty was indispensable to the support of social order. The United States Constitution, widely admired as one of the seminal achievements in the history of humanity, condemns cruel and inhuman punishment, but does not condemn capital punishment.

7. *(The death penalty is state-sanctioned murder.)* This is the defense with which Messrs. Willie and Shaw hoped to soften the resolve of those who sentenced them to death. By saying in effect, “You’re no better than I am,” the murderer seeks to bring his accusers down to his own level. It is also a popular argument among opponents of capital punishment, but a transparently false one. Simply put, the state has rights that the private individual does not. In a democracy, those rights are given to the state by the electorate. The execution of a lawfully condemned killer is no more an act of murder than is legal imprisonment an act of kidnapping. If an individual forces a neighbor to pay him money under threat of punishment, it’s called extortion. If the state does it, it’s called taxation. Rights and responsibilities surrendered by the individual are what give the state its power to govern. This contract is the foundation of civilization itself.

Everyone wants his or her rights, and will defend them jealously. Not everyone, however, wants responsibilities, especially the painful responsibilities that come with law enforcement. Twenty-one years ago a woman named Kitty Genovese was assaulted and murdered on a street in New York. Dozens of neighbors heard her cries for help but did nothing to assist her. They didn’t even call the police. In such a climate the criminal understandably grows bolder. In the presence of moral cowardice, he lectures us on our supposed failings and tries to equate his crimes with our quest for justice.

The death of anyone—even a convicted killer—diminishes us all. But we are diminished even more by a justice system that fails to function. It is an illusion to let ourselves believe that doing away with capital punishment removes the murderer’s deed from our conscience. The rights of society are paramount. When we protect guilty lives, we give up innocent lives in exchange. When opponents of capital punishment say to the state, “I will not let you kill in my name,” they are also saying to murderers: “You can kill in your *own* name as long as I have an excuse for not getting involved.”



It is hard to imagine anything worse than being murdered while neighbors do nothing. But something worse exists. When those same neighbors shrink back from justly punishing the murderer, the victim dies twice. ■

### THE DEATH PENALTY

by David Bruck

Mayor Ed Koch contends that the death penalty "affirms life." By failing to execute murderers, he says, we "signal a lessened regard for the value of the victim's life." Koch suggests that people who oppose the death penalty are like Kitty Genovese's neighbors, who heard her cries for help but did nothing while an attacker stabbed her to death.

This is the standard "moral" defense of death as punishment: even if executions don't deter violent crime any more effectively than imprisonment, they are still required as the only means we have of doing justice in response to the worst of crimes.

Until recently, this "moral" argument had to be considered in the abstract, since no one was being executed in the United States. But the death penalty is back now, at least in the southern states, where every one of the more than 30 executions carried out over the last two years has taken place. Those of us who live in those states are getting to see the difference between the death penalty in theory, and what happens when you actually try to use it.

South Carolina resumed executing prisoners with the electrocution of Joseph Carl Shaw. Shaw was condemned to death for helping to murder two teenagers while he was serving as a military policeman at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. His crime, propelled by mental illness and PCP, was one of terrible brutality. It is Shaw's last words ("Killing was wrong when I did it. It is wrong when you do it. . .") that so outraged Mayor Koch: he finds it "a curiosity of modern life that we are being lectured on morality by cold-blooded killers." And so it is.

But it was not "modern life" that brought this curiosity into being. It was capital punishment. The electric chair was J. C. Shaw's platform. (The mayor mistakenly writes that Shaw's statement came in the form of a plea to the governor for clemency: actually Shaw made it only seconds before his death, as he waited, shaved and strapped into the chair, for the switch to be thrown.) It was the chair that provided Shaw with celebrity and an opportunity to lecture us on right and wrong. What made this weird moral reversal even worse is that J. C. Shaw faced his own death with

undeniable dignity and courage. And while Shaw died, the TV crews recorded another “curiosity” of the death penalty—the crowd gathered outside the deathhouse to cheer on the executioner. Whoops of elation greeted the announcement of Shaw’s death. Waiting at the penitentiary gates for the appearance of the hearse bearing Shaw’s remains, one demonstrator started yelling, “Where’s the beef?”

For those who had to see the execution of J. C. Shaw, it wasn’t easy to keep in mind that the purpose of the whole spectacle was to affirm life. It will be harder still when Florida executes a cop-killer named Alvin Ford. Ford has lost his mind during his years of death-row confinement, and now spends his days trembling, rocking back and forth, and muttering unintelligible prayers. This has led to litigation over whether Ford meets a centuries-old legal standard for mental competency. Since the Middle Ages, the Anglo-American legal system has generally prohibited the execution of anyone who is too mentally ill to understand what is about to be done to him and why. If Florida wins its case, it will have earned the right to electrocute Ford in his present condition. If it loses, he will not be executed until the state has first nursed him back to some semblance of mental health.

We can at least be thankful that this demoralizing spectacle involves a prisoner who is actually guilty of murder. But this may not always be so. The ordeal of Lenell Jeter—the young black engineer who recently served more than a year of a life sentence for a Texas armed robbery that he didn’t commit—should remind us that the system is quite capable of making the very worst sort of mistake. That Jeter was eventually cleared is a fluke. If the robbery had occurred at 7 P.M. rather than 3 P.M., he’d have had no alibi, and would still be in prison today. And if someone had been killed in that robbery, Jeter probably would have been sentenced to death. We’d have seen the usual execution-day interviews with state officials and the victim’s relatives, all complaining that Jeter’s appeals took too long. And Jeter’s last words from the gurney would have taken their place among the growing literature of death-house oration that so irritates the mayor.

Koch quotes Hugo Adam Bedau, a prominent abolitionist, to the effect that the record fails to establish that innocent defendants have been executed in the past. But this doesn’t mean, as Koch implies, that it hasn’t happened. All Bedau was saying was that doubts concerning executed prisoners’ guilt are almost never resolved. Bedau is at work now on an effort to determine how many wrongful death sentences may have been imposed: his list of murder convictions since 1900 in which the state eventually *admitted* error is some 400 cases long. Of course, very few of these

cases involved actual executions: the mistakes that Bedau documents were uncovered precisely because the prisoner was alive and able to fight for his vindication. The cases where someone is executed are the very cases in which we're least likely to learn that we got the wrong man.

I don't claim that executions of entirely innocent people will occur very often. But they will occur. And other sorts of mistakes already have. Roosevelt Green was executed in Georgia two days before J. C. Shaw. Green and an accomplice kidnapped a young woman. Green swore that his companion shot her to death after Green had left, and that he knew nothing about the murder. Green's claim was supported by a statement that his accomplice made to a witness after the crime. The jury never resolved whether Green was telling the truth, and when he tried to take a polygraph examination a few days before his scheduled execution, the state of Georgia refused to allow the examiner into the prison. As the pressure for symbolic retribution mounts, the courts, like the public, are losing patience with such details. Green was electrocuted on January 9, while members of the Ku Klux Klan rallied outside the prison.

Then there is another sort of arbitrariness that happens all the time. Last October, Louisiana executed a man named Ernest Knighton. Knighton had killed a gas station owner during a robbery. Like any murder, this was a terrible crime. But it was not premeditated, and is the sort of crime that very rarely results in a death sentence. Why was Knighton electrocuted when almost everyone else who committed the same offense was not? Was it because he was black? Was it because his victim and all 12 members of the jury that sentenced him were white? Was it because Knighton's court-appointed lawyer presented no evidence on his behalf at his sentencing hearing? Or maybe there's no reason except bad luck. One thing is clear: Ernest Knighton was picked out to die the way a fisherman takes a cricket out of a bait jar. No one cares which cricket gets impaled on the hook.

Not every prisoner executed recently was chosen that randomly. But many were. And having selected these men so casually, so blindly, the death penalty system asks us to accept that the purpose of killing each of them is to affirm the sanctity of human life.

The death penalty states are also learning that the death penalty is easier to advocate than it is to administer. In Florida, where executions have become almost routine, the governor reports that nearly a third of his time is spent reviewing the clemency requests of condemned prisoners. The Florida Supreme Court is hopelessly backlogged with death cases. Some have taken five years to decide, and the rest of the Court's work



waits in line behind the death appeals. Florida's death row currently holds more than 230 prisoners. State officials are reportedly considering building a special "death prison" devoted entirely to the isolation and electrocution of the condemned. The state is also considering the creation of a special public defender unit that will do nothing else but handle death penalty appeals. The death penalty, in short, is spawning death agencies.

And what is Florida getting for all of this? The state went through almost all of 1983 without executing anyone: its rate of intentional homicide declined by 17 percent. Last year Florida executed eight people—the most of any state, and the sixth highest total for any year since Florida started electrocuting people back in 1924. Elsewhere in the U.S. last year, the homicide rate continued to decline. But in Florida, it actually rose by 5.1 percent.

But these are just the tiresome facts. The electric chair has been a centerpiece of each of Koch's recent political campaigns, and he knows better than anyone how little the facts have to do with the public's support for capital punishment. What really fuels the death penalty is the justifiable frustration and rage of people who see that the government is not coping with violent crime. So what if the death penalty doesn't work? At least it gives us the satisfaction of knowing that we got one or two of the sons of bitches.

Perhaps we want retribution on the flesh and bone of a handful of convicted murders so badly that we're willing to close our eyes to all of the demoralization and danger that come with it. A lot of politicians think so, and they may be right. But if they are, then let's at least look honestly at what we're doing. This lottery of death both comes from and encourages an attitude toward human life that is not reverent, but reckless.

And that is why the mayor is dead wrong when he confuses such fury with justice. He suggests that we trivialize murder unless we kill murderers. By that logic, we also trivialize rape unless we sodomize rapists. The sin of Kitty Genovese's neighbors wasn't that they failed to stab her attacker to death. Justice does demand that murderers be punished. And common sense demands that society be protected from them. But neither justice nor self-preservation demands that we kill men whom we have already imprisoned.

The electric chair in which J. C. Shaw died earlier this year was built in 1912 at the suggestion of South Carolina's governor at the time, Cole Blease. Governor Blease's other criminal justice initiative was an impassioned crusade in favor of lynch law. Any lesser response, the governor insisted, trivialized the loathsome crimes of interracial rape and murder.



In 1912 a lot of people agreed with Governor Blease that a proper regard for justice required both lynching and the electric chair. Eventually we are going to learn that justice requires neither. ■

### *Questions for Analysis*

For each article on capital punishment, do the following:

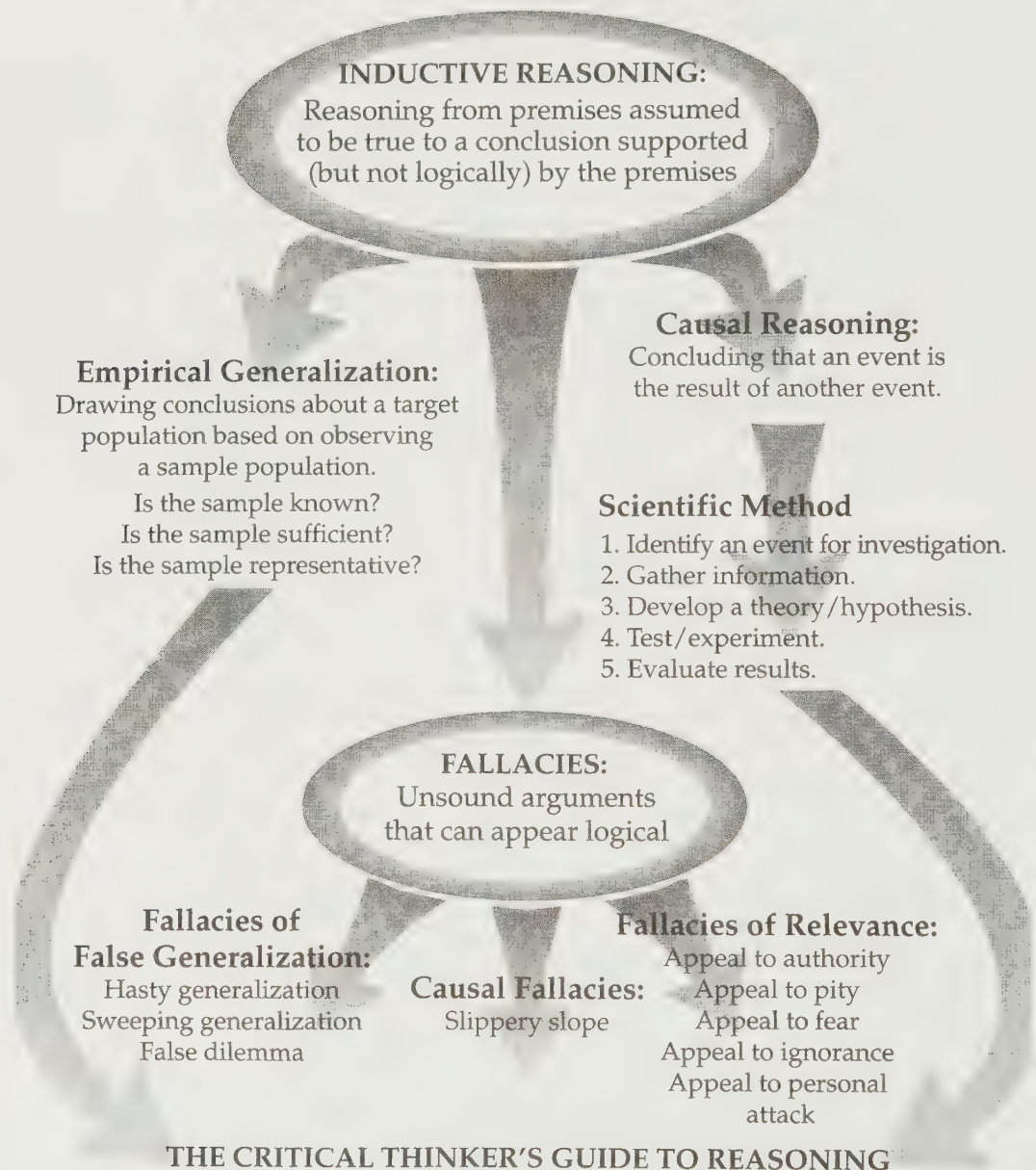
1. Identify the arguments that were used and summarize the reasons and conclusion for each.
2. Describe the types of argument forms that you identified.
3. Evaluate the truth of the reasons that support the conclusion for each of the arguments that you identified.
4. Construct additional arguments on both sides of this issue, using the argument forms described in this chapter. ◀

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# CHAPTER 11 REASONING CRITICALLY



REASONING IS THE TYPE OF THINKING that uses arguments—reasons in support of conclusions—to decide, explain, predict, and persuade. Effective reasoning involves using all of the intellectual skills and critical attitudes we have been developing in this book, and in this chapter we will further explore various dimensions of the reasoning process.

Chapter 10 focused primarily on *deductive reasoning*, an argument form in which one reasons from premises that are known or assumed to be true to a conclusion that follows necessarily from the premises. In this chapter we will examine *inductive reasoning*, an argument form in which one reasons from premises that are known or assumed to be true to a conclusion that is supported by the premises but does not follow logically from them.

<b>Inductive Reasoning</b>	An argument form in which one reasons from premises that are known or assumed to be true to a conclusion that is supported by the premises but does not necessarily follow from them
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When you reason inductively, your premises provide evidence that makes it more or less probable (but not certain) that the conclusion is true. The following statements are examples of conclusions reached through inductive reasoning.

1. A recent Gallup poll reported that 74 percent of the American public believes that abortion should remain legalized.
2. On the average, a person with a college degree will earn over \$830,000 more in his or her lifetime than a person with just a high school diploma.
3. In a recent survey, twice as many doctors interviewed stated that if they were stranded on a desert island, they would prefer Bayer Aspirin to Extra Strength Tylenol.
4. The outbreak of food poisoning at the end-of-year school party was probably caused by the squid salad.
5. The devastating disease AIDS is caused by a particularly complex virus that may not be curable.
6. The solar system is probably the result of an enormous explosion—a “big bang”—that occurred billions of years ago.

The first three statements are forms of inductive reasoning known as *empirical generalization*, a general statement about an entire group made on the basis of observing some members of the group. The final three statements are

examples of *causal reasoning*, a form of inductive reasoning in which it is claimed that an event (or events) is the result of the occurrence of another event (or events). We will be exploring the ways each of these forms of inductive reasoning functions in our lives and in various fields of study.

In addition to examining various ways of reasoning logically and effectively, we will also explore certain forms of reasoning that are not logical and, as a result, are usually not effective. These ways of pseudo-reasoning (false reasoning) are often termed *fallacies*: arguments that are not sound because of various errors in reasoning. Fallacious reasoning is typically used to influence others. It seeks to persuade not on the basis of sound arguments and critical thinking but rather on the basis of emotional and illogical factors.

**Fallacies** Unsound arguments that are often persuasive because they can appear to be logical because they usually appeal to our emotions and prejudices, and because they often support conclusions that we want to believe are accurate

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## EMPIRICAL GENERALIZATION

One of the most important tools used by both natural and social scientists is empirical generalization. Have you ever wondered how the major television and radio networks can accurately predict election results hours before the polls close? These predictions are made possible by the power of empirical generalization, which is defined as reasoning from a limited sample to a general conclusion based on this sample.

**Empirical Generalization** A form of inductive reasoning in which a general statement is made about an entire group (the “target population”) based on observing some members of the group (the “sample population”)



Network election predictions, as well as public opinion polls that occur throughout a political campaign, are based on interviews with a select number of people. Ideally, pollsters would interview everyone in the *target population* (in this case, voters), but this, of course, is hardly practical. Instead, they select a relatively small group of individuals from the target population, known as a *sample*, who they have determined will adequately represent the group as a whole. Pollsters believe that they can then generalize the opinions of this smaller group to the target population. And with a few notable exceptions (such as in the 1948 presidential election, when New York Governor Thomas Dewey went to bed believing he had been elected president and woke up a loser to Harry Truman), these results are highly accurate. (Polling techniques are much more sophisticated today than they were in 1948.)

There are three key criteria for evaluating inductive arguments:

- Is the sample known?
- Is the sample sufficient?
- Is the sample representative?

### *Is the Sample Known?*

An inductive argument is only as strong as the sample on which it is based. For example, sample populations described in vague and unclear terms—"highly placed sources" or "many young people interviewed," for example—provide a treacherously weak foundation for generalizing to larger populations. In order for an inductive argument to be persuasive, the sample population should be explicitly *known* and clearly identified. Natural and social scientists take great care in selecting the members in the sample groups, and this is an important part of the data that is available to outside investigators who may wish to evaluate and verify the results.

### *Is the Sample Sufficient?*

The second criterion for evaluating inductive reasoning is to consider the *size* of the sample. It should be sufficiently large enough to give an accurate sense of the group as a whole. In the polling example discussed earlier, we would be concerned if only a few registered voters had been interviewed, and the results of these interviews were then generalized to a much larger population. Overall, the larger the sample, the more reliable the inductive conclusions. Natural and social scientists have developed precise guidelines for determining the size of the sample needed to achieve reliable results. For example, poll results are



*Empirical generalizations are general statements made about an entire group based on observations of some members of the group. Although this is an important form of reasoning, care must be taken to avoid the fallacy of hasty generalization.*

often accompanied by a qualification such as “These results are subject to an error factor of  $\pm 3$  percentage points.” This means that if the sample reveals that 47 percent of those interviewed prefer candidate X, then we can reliably state that 44 to 50 percent of the target population prefer candidate X. Because a sample is usually a small portion of the target population, we can rarely state that the two match each other exactly—there must always be some room for variation. The exceptions to this are situations in which the target population is completely homogeneous. For example, tasting one cookie from a bag of cookies is usually enough to tell us whether or not the entire bag is stale.

### *Is the Sample Representative?*

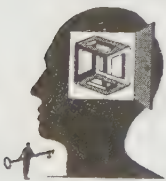
The third crucial element in effective inductive reasoning is the *representativeness* of the sample. If we are to generalize with confidence from the sample to

the target population, then we have to be sure the sample is similar to the larger group from which it is drawn in all relevant aspects. For instance, in the polling example, the sample population should reflect the same percentage of men and women, of Democrats and Republicans, of young and old, and so on, as the target population. It is obvious that many characteristics, such as hair color, favorite food, and shoe size, are not relevant to the comparison. The better the sample reflects the target population in terms of *relevant* qualities, however, then the better the accuracy of the generalizations. On the other hand, when the sample is *not* representative of the target population—for example, if the election pollsters interviewed only females between the ages of thirty and thirty-five—then the sample is termed *biased*, and any generalizations about the target population will be highly suspect.

How do we ensure that the sample is representative of the target population? One important device is *random selection*, a selection strategy in which every member of the target population has an equal chance of being included in the sample. For example, the various techniques used to select winning lottery tickets are supposed to be random—each ticket is supposed to have an equal chance of winning. In complex cases of inductive reasoning—such as polling—random selection is often combined with the confirmation that all of the important categories in the population are adequately represented. For example, an election pollster would want to be certain that all significant geographical areas are included and then would randomly select individuals from within those areas to compose the sample.

Understanding the principles of empirical generalization is of crucial importance to effective thinking because we are continually challenged to construct and evaluate this form of inductive argument in our lives.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 11.1 *EVALUATING INDUCTIVE ARGUMENTS*



Review the following examples of inductive arguments. For each argument, evaluate the quality of the thinking by answering the following questions:

1. Is the sample known?
2. Is the sample sufficient?
3. Is the sample representative?
4. Do you believe the conclusions are likely to be accurate? Why or why not?

In a study of a possible relationship between pornography and antisocial behavior, questionnaires went out to 7,500 psychiatrists and psychoanalysts whose listing in the directory of the American Psychological



Association indicated clinical experience. Over 3,400 of these professionals responded. The result: 7.4 percent of the psychiatrists and psychologists had cases in which they were convinced that pornography was a causal factor in antisocial behavior; an additional 9.4 percent were suspicious; 3.2 percent did not commit themselves; and 80 percent said they had no cases in which a causal connection was suspected.

A survey by the Sleep Disorder Clinic of the VA hospital in La Jolla, California (involving more than one million people), revealed that people who sleep more than ten hours a night have a death rate 80 percent higher than those who sleep only seven or eight hours. Men who sleep less than four hours a night have a death rate 180 percent higher, and women with less [than four hours] sleep have a rate 40 percent higher. This might be taken as indicating that too much or too little sleep causes death.

"U.S. Wastes Food Worth Millions." Americans in the economic middle waste more food than their rich and poor counterparts, according to a study published Saturday. Carried out in Tucson, Arizona, by University of Arizona students under the direction of Dr. William L. Rathje, the study analyzed 600 bags of garbage each week for three years from lower-, middle-, and upper-income neighborhoods. They found that city residents throw out around 10 percent of the food they brought home—about 9,500 tons of food each year. The figure amounts to \$9 to \$11 million worth of food. Most of the waste occurred in middle-class neighborhoods. Both the poor and the wealthy were significantly more frugal.

Being a general practitioner in a rural area has tremendous drawbacks—being on virtually 24-hour call 365 days a year, patients without financial means or insurance, low fees in the first place, inadequate facilities and assistance. Nevertheless, America's small town G.P.s seem fairly content with their lot. According to a survey taken by *Country Doctor*, fully 50 percent wrote back that they "basically like being a rural G.P." Only 1 in 15 regretted that he or she had not specialized. Only 2 out of 20 rural general practitioners would trade places with their urban counterparts, given the chance. And only 1 in 30 would "choose some other line of work altogether."

A recent survey of 5,012 students from 4th grade through high school yields important insights about how young people make moral decisions. Asked how they would decide what to do if "unsure of what was right or wrong

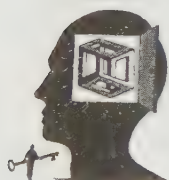


in a particular situation," these were the responses and how they were described by the researchers:

- 23% said they would "do what was best for everyone involved," an orientation the researchers labeled "civic humanist."
- 20% would "follow the advice of an authority, such as a parent, teacher, or youth leader"—"conventionalist."
- 18% of respondents said they would do what would make them "happy"—"expressivist."
- 16% would "do what God or Scriptures" say "is right"—"theistic."
- 10% would "do what would improve their own situations"—"utilitarian."
- 9% did not know, and 3% wrote that they would follow their "conscience."

When young people were asked their beliefs about anything from lying, stealing, and using drugs to abortion or reasons for choosing a job, these rudimentary ethical systems or "moral compasses" turned out to be more important than the background factors that social scientists habitually favor in their search for explanations, like economic status, sex, race, and even religious practice. ◀

### THINKING ACTIVITY 11.2 *DESIGNING A POLL*



*Select an issue that you would like to poll a group of people about—for example, the population of your school or your neighborhood. Describe in specific terms how you would go about constructing a sample both large and representative enough for you to generalize the results to the target population accurately.* ◀

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## FALLACIES OF FALSE GENERALIZATION

In Chapter 7, "Forming and Applying Concepts," we explored the way that we form concepts through the interactive process of generalizing (identifying the common qualities that define the boundaries of the concept) and interpreting (identifying examples of the concept). This generalizing and interpreting process is similar to the process involved in constructing empirical generalizations,

as we seek to reach a general conclusion based on a limited number of examples and then apply this conclusion to other examples. Although generalizing and interpreting are useful in forming concepts, they also can give rise to fallacious ways of thinking, including the following:

- Hasty generalization
- Sweeping generalization
- False dilemma

### *Hasty Generalization*

Consider the following examples of reasoning. Do you think that the arguments are sound? Why or why not?

My boyfriends have never shown any real concern for my feelings. My conclusion is that men are insensitive, selfish, and emotionally superficial.

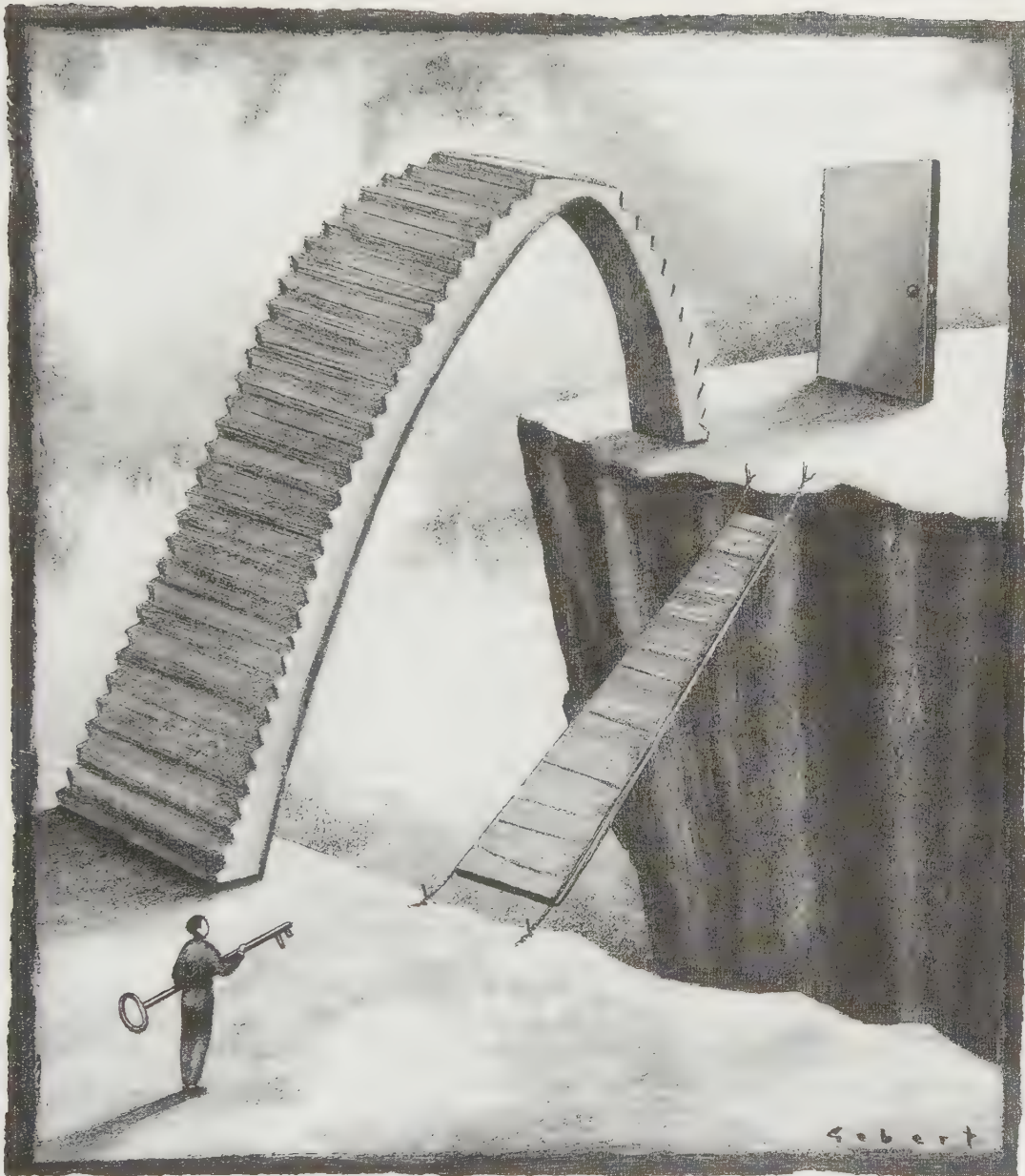
My mother always gets upset over insignificant things. This leads me to believe that women are very emotional.

In both of these cases, a general conclusion has been reached that is based on a very small sample. As a result, the reasons provide very weak support for the conclusions that are being developed. It just does not make good sense to generalize from a few individuals to all men or all women. Our conclusion is *hasty* because our sample is not large enough and/or not representative enough to provide adequate justification for our generalization.

Of course, many generalizations are more warranted than the two given here because the conclusion is based on a sample that is larger and more representative of the group as a whole. For example:

I have done a lot of research in a variety of automotive publications on the relationship between the size of cars and the gas mileage they get. In general, I think it makes sense to conclude that large cars tend to get fewer miles per gallon than smaller cars.

In this case, the conclusion is generalized from a larger and more representative sample than those in the preceding two arguments. As a result, the reason for the last argument provides much stronger support for the conclusion.



*Fallacies are unsound arguments that are often persuasive because they appeal to our emotions and prejudices in order to support illogical conclusions. Choosing fallacious reasoning leads to oversimplified and inaccurate conclusions, while choosing logical reasoning results in sound, intelligent conclusions.*

## *Sweeping Generalization*

Whereas the fallacy of hasty generalization deals with errors in the process of generalizing, the fallacy of *sweeping generalization* focuses on difficulties in the process of interpreting. Consider the following examples of reasoning. Do you think that the arguments are sound? Why or why not?

Vigorous exercise contributes to overall good health. Therefore, vigorous exercise should be practiced by recent heart attack victims, people who are out of shape, and women who are about to give birth.

People should be allowed to make their own decisions, providing that their actions do not harm other people. Therefore, people who are trying to commit suicide should be left alone to do what they want.

In both of these cases, generalizations that are true in most cases have been deliberately applied to instances that are clearly intended to be exceptions to the generalizations because of special features that the exceptions possess. Of course, the use of sweeping generalizations stimulates us to clarify the generalization, rephrasing it to exclude instances, like those given here, that have special features. For example, the first generalization could be reformulated as "Vigorous exercise contributes to overall good health, *except for* recent heart attack victims, people out of shape, and women who are about to give birth." Sweeping generalizations become dangerous only when they are accepted without critical analysis and reformulation.

Review the following examples of sweeping generalizations and in each case (a) explain *why* it is a sweeping generalization and (b) reformulate the statement so that it becomes a legitimate generalization.

1. A college education stimulates you to develop as a person and prepares you for many professions. Therefore, all persons should attend college, no matter what career they are interested in.
2. Drugs such as heroin and morphine are addictive and therefore qualify as dangerous drugs. This means that they should never be used, even as pain-killers in medical situations.
3. Once criminals have served time for the crimes they have committed, they have paid their debt to society and should be permitted to work at any job they choose.



### *False Dilemma*

The fallacy of the false dilemma—also known as the either/or fallacy or the black-or-white fallacy—occurs when we are asked to choose between two extreme alternatives without being able to consider additional options. For example, we may say, “Either you’re for me or against me,” meaning that a choice has to be made between these alternatives. Sometimes giving people only two choices on an issue makes sense (“If you decide to swim the English Channel, you’ll either make it or you won’t”). At other times, however, viewing situations in such extreme terms may be a serious oversimplification—for it would mean viewing a complicated situation in terms that are too simple.

The following statements are examples of false dilemmas. After analyzing the fallacy in each case, suggest different alternatives than those being presented.

**Example:** “Everyone in Germany is a National Socialist—the few outside the party are either lunatics or idiots.” (Adolf Hitler, quoted by the *New York Times*, April 5, 1938)

**Analysis:** This is an oversimplification. Hitler is saying that if you are not a Nazi, then you are a lunatic or an idiot. By limiting the population to these groups, Hitler was simply ignoring all the people who did not qualify as Nazis, lunatics, or idiots.

1. “America—love it or leave it!”
2. “She loves me; she loves me not.”
3. “Live free or die.”
4. “If you’re not part of the solution, then you’re part of the problem.” (Eldridge Cleaver)
5. “If you know about BMW, you either own one or you want to.”

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## CAUSAL REASONING

A second major type of inductive reasoning is causal reasoning, a form in which an event (or events) is claimed to be the result of the occurrence of another event (or events).

**Causal Reasoning** A form of inductive reasoning in which an event (or events) is claimed to be the result of another event (or events)

As you use your thinking abilities to try to understand the world you live in, you often ask the question, “Why did that happen?” For example, if the engine of your car is running roughly, your natural question is, “What’s wrong?” If you wake up one morning with an upset stomach, you usually ask yourself, “What’s the cause?” Or maybe the softball team you belong to has been losing recently. You typically wonder, “What’s going on?” In each of these cases you assume that there is some factor (or factors) responsible for what is occurring, some *cause* (or causes) that results in the *effect* (or effects) you are observing (the rough engine, the upset stomach).

As you saw in Chapter 8, “Relating and Organizing,” causality is one of the basic patterns of thinking we use to organize and make sense of our experience. For instance, imagine how bewildered you would feel if a mechanic looked at your car and told you there was no explanation for the poorly running engine. Or suppose you take your upset stomach to the doctor, who examines you and then concludes that there is no possible causal explanation for the malady. In each case you would be understandably skeptical of the diagnosis and would probably seek another opinion.

### *The Scientific Method*

Causal reasoning is also the backbone of the natural and social sciences; it is responsible for the remarkable understanding of our world that has been achieved. The *scientific method* works on the assumption that the world is constructed in a complex web of causal relationships that can be discovered through systematic investigation. Scientists have devised an organized approach for discovering causal relationships and testing the accuracy of conclusions. The sequence of steps is as follows:

1. Identify an event or relationship between events to be investigated.
2. Gather information about the event (or events).
3. Develop a theory or hypothesis to explain what is happening.
4. Test the theory or hypothesis through experimentation.
5. Evaluate the theory or hypothesis.



How does this sequence work when applied to the situation of the rough-running engine mentioned earlier?

1. *Identify an event to be investigated.* In this case, the event is obvious—your car's engine is running poorly and you want to discover the cause of the problem so you can fix it.
2. *Gather information about the event.* This step involves locating any relevant information about the situation that will help solve the problem. You initiate this step by asking and trying to answer a variety of questions: When did the engine begin running poorly? Was it abrupt or gradual? When did the car last have a tune-up? Are there other mechanical difficulties that might be related? Has anything unusual occurred with the car recently?
3. *Develop a theory or hypothesis to explain what is happening.* After reviewing the relevant information, you will want to identify the most likely explanation of what has happened. This possible explanation is known as a *hypothesis*. (A *theory* is normally a more complex model that involves a number of interconnected hypotheses, such as the theory of quantum mechanics in physics.)

**Hypothesis** A possible explanation that is introduced to account for a set of facts and that can be used as a basis for further investigation

Although your hypothesis may be suggested by the information you have, it goes beyond the information as well and so must be tested before you commit yourself to it. In this case the hypothesis you might settle on is “water in the gas.” This hypothesis was suggested by your recollection that the engine troubles began right after you bought gas in the pouring rain. This hypothesis may be correct or it may be incorrect—you have to test it to find out.

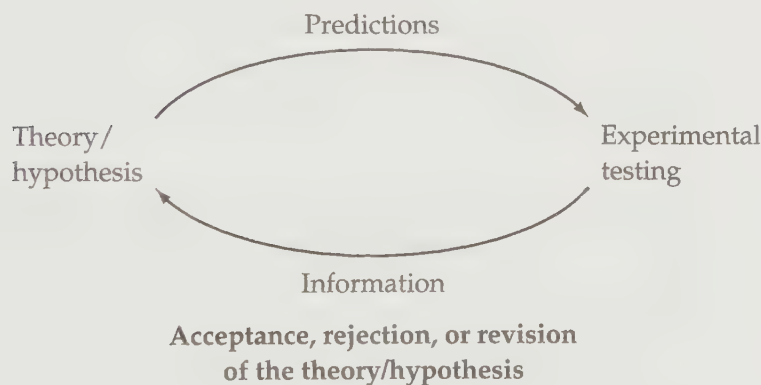
When you devise a plausible hypothesis to be tested, you should keep three general guidelines in mind:

- *Explanatory power:* The hypothesis should effectively explain the event you are investigating. The hypothesis that damaged windshield wipers are causing the engine problem doesn’t seem to provide an adequate explanation of the difficulties.
  - *Economy:* The hypothesis should not be unnecessarily complex. The explanation that your engine difficulty is the result of sabotage by an unfriendly neighbor is possible but unlikely. There are simpler and more direct explanations you should test first.
  - *Predictive power:* The hypothesis should allow you to make various predictions to test its accuracy. If the “water in the gas” hypothesis is accurate, you can predict that removing the water from the gas tank and gas line should clear up the difficulty.
4. *Test the theory or hypothesis through experimentation.* Once you identify a hypothesis that meets these three guidelines, the next task is to devise an experiment to test its accuracy. In the case of your troubled car, you would test your hypothesis by pouring several containers of “dry-gas” into the tank, blowing out the gas line, and cleaning the carburetor. By removing the moisture in the gas system, you should be able to determine whether your hypothesis is correct.
  5. *Evaluate the theory or hypothesis.* After reviewing the results of your experiment, you usually can assess the accuracy of your hypothesis. If the engine runs smoothly after you remove moisture from the gas line, then this strong evidence supports your hypothesis. On the other hand, if the engine does *not* run smoothly after your efforts, then this persuasive evidence suggests



that your hypothesis was not correct. There is, however, a third possibility. Removing the moisture from the gas system might improve the engine's performance somewhat but not entirely. In that case, you might want to construct a *revised* hypothesis along the lines of "Water in the gas system is partially responsible for my rough-running engine, but another cause (or causes) might be involved as well."

If the evidence does not support your hypothesis or supports a revised version of it, you then begin the entire process again by identifying and testing a new hypothesis. The natural and social sciences engage in an ongoing process of developing theories and hypotheses and testing them through experimental design. Many theories and hypotheses are much more complex than our "moisture in the gas" example and take years of generating, revising, and testing. Determining the subatomic structure of the universe and finding cures for various kinds of cancers, for example, have been the subjects of countless theories and hypotheses, as well as experiments to test their accuracy. We might diagram this operation of the scientific process as follows:



### THINKING ACTIVITY 11.3 *APPLYING THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD*



Select one of the following situations or describe a situation of your own choosing. Then analyze the situation by working through the various steps of the scientific method listed directly after.

- Situation 1: You wake up in the morning with an upset stomach.
- Situation 2: Your grades have been declining all semester.
- Situation 3: (Your own choosing)

1. *Identify an event or a relationship between events to be investigated.* Describe the situation you have selected.
2. *Gather information about the event.* Elaborate the situation by providing additional details. Be sure to include a variety of possible causes for the event. (For example, an upset stomach might be the result of food poisoning, the flu, anxiety, etc.).
3. *Develop a theory or hypothesis to explain what is happening.* Based on the information you have described, identify a plausible hypothesis that (a) explains what occurred, (b) is clear and direct, and (c) leads to predictions that can be tested.
4. *Test the theory or hypothesis through experimentation.* Design a way of testing your hypothesis that results in evidence proving or disproving it.
5. *Evaluate the theory or hypothesis.* Describe the results of your experiment and explain whether the results lead you to accept, reject, or revise your hypothesis. ◀

In designing the experiment in Thinking Activity 11.3, you may have used one of the two common reasoning patterns.

**Reasoning Pattern 1:** *A caused B because A is the only relevant common element shared by more than one occurrence of B.*

For example, imagine that you are investigating your upset stomach and you decide to call two friends who had dinner with you the previous evening to see if they have similar symptoms. You discover they also have upset stomachs. Because dining at “Sam’s Seafood” was the only experience shared by the three of you that might explain the three stomach problems, you conclude that food poisoning may in fact be the cause. Further, although each of you ordered a different entrée, you all shared an appetizer, “Sam’s Special Squid,” which suggests that you may have identified the cause. As you can see, this pattern of reasoning looks for the common thread linking different occurrences of the same event to identify the cause; stated more simply, “The cause is the common thread.”

**Reasoning Pattern 2:** *A caused B because A is the only relevant difference between this situation and other situations in which B did not take place.*

For example, imagine that you are investigating the reasons that your team, which has been winning all year, has suddenly begun to lose. One way of ap-

proaching this situation is to look for circumstances that might have changed at the time your team's fortunes began to decline. Your investigation yields two possible explanations. First, your team started wearing new uniforms about the time it started losing. Second, one of your regular players was sidelined with a foot injury. You decide to test the first hypothesis by having the team begin wearing the old uniforms again. When this doesn't change your fortunes, you conclude that the missing player may be the cause of the difficulties, and you anxiously await the player's return to see if your reasoning is accurate. As you can see, this pattern of reasoning looks for relevant differences linked to the situation you are trying to explain; stated more simply, "The cause is the difference."

### *Controlled Experiments*

Although our analysis of causal reasoning has focused on causal relationships between specific events, much of scientific research concerns causal factors influencing populations composed of many individuals. In these cases, the causal relationships tend to be much more complex than the simple formulation *A* causes *B*. For example, on every package of cigarettes sold in the United States appears a message such as "Surgeon General's Warning: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy." This does not mean that every cigarette smoked has a direct impact on one's health, nor does it mean that everyone who smokes moderately, or even heavily, will die prematurely of cancer, heart disease, or emphysema. Instead, the statement means that if you habitually smoke, your chances of developing one of the diseases normally associated with smoking are significantly higher than are those of someone who does not smoke or who smokes only occasionally. How were scientists able to arrive at this conclusion?

The reasoning strategy scientists use to reach conclusions like this one is the *controlled experiment*, and it is one of the most powerful reasoning strategies ever developed. There are three different kinds of controlled experiment designs:

1. Cause-to-effect experiments (with intervention)
2. Cause-to-effect experiments (without intervention)
3. Effect-to-cause experiments

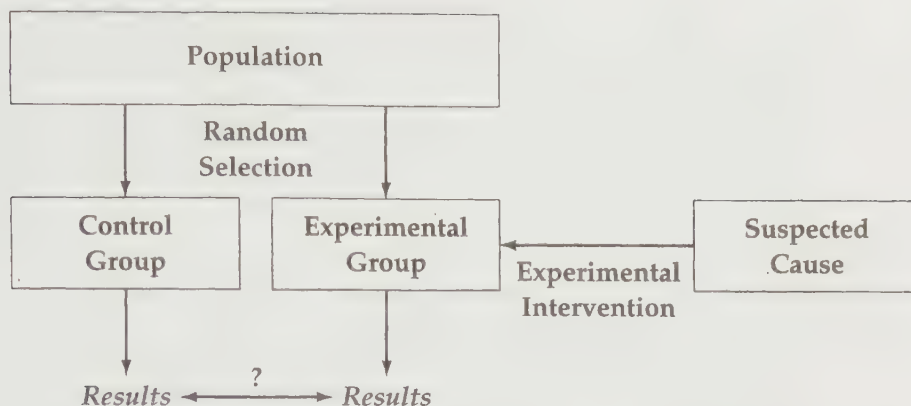
***Cause-to-Effect Experiments (with Intervention)*** The first of these forms of reasoning is illustrated by the following example. Imagine that you have devel-

oped a new cream you believe will help cure baldness in men and women, and you want to evaluate its effectiveness. What do you do? To begin with, you have to identify a group of people who accurately represent all of the balding men and women in the United States because testing it on all balding people simply isn't feasible. This involves following the guidelines for inductive reasoning described in the last section. It is important that the group you select to test be *representative* of all balding people (known as the *target population*) because you hope your product will grow hair on all types of heads. For example, if you selected only men between the ages of twenty and thirty to test, the experiment would establish only whether the product works for men of these ages. Additional experiments would have to be conducted for women and other age groups. This representative group is known as a *sample*. Scientists have developed strategies for selecting sample groups to ensure that they fairly mirror the larger group from which they are drawn.

Once you have selected your sample of balding men and women—say, you have identified 200 people—the next step is to divide the sample into two groups of 100 people that are alike in all relevant respects. The best way to ensure that the groups are essentially alike is through the technique we examined earlier called *random selection*, which means that each individual selected has the same chance of being chosen as everyone else. You then designate one group as the *experimental group* and the other group as the *control group*. You next give the individuals in the experimental group treatments of your hair-growing cream, and you give either no treatments or a harmless, non-hair-growing cream to the control group. At the conclusion of the testing period, you compare the experimental group with the control group to evaluate hair gain and hair loss.

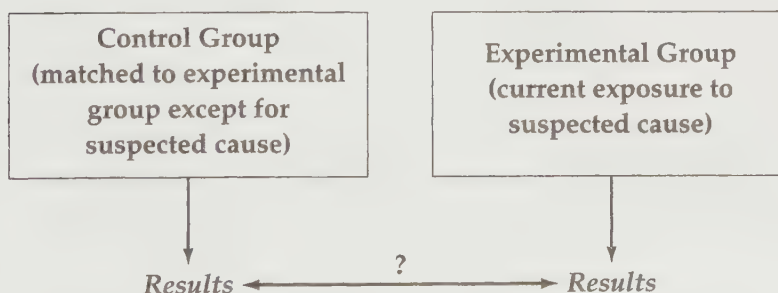
Suppose that a number of individuals in the experimental group do indeed show evidence of more new hair growth than the control group. How can we be sure this is because of the cream and not simply a chance occurrence? Scientists have developed a statistical formula based on the size of the sample and the frequency of the observed effects. For example, imagine that 13 persons in your experimental group show evidence of new hair growth, whereas no one in the control group shows any such evidence. Statisticians have determined that we can say with 95 percent certainty that the new hair growth was caused by your new cream—that the results were not merely the result of chance. This type of experimental result is usually expressed by saying that the experimental results were significant at the 0.05 level, a standard criterion in experimental research. The diagram on page 465 shows the cause-to-effect experiment (with intervention).





### CAUSE-TO-EFFECT EXPERIMENTS (WITH INTERVENTION)

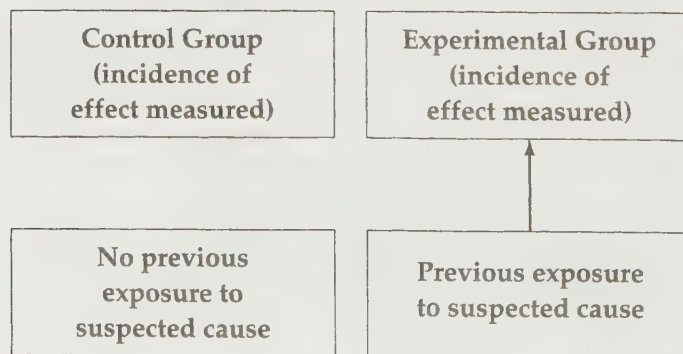
*Cause-to-Effect Experiments (Without Intervention)* The second form of controlled experiment is known as the *cause-to-effect experiment (without intervention)*. This form of experimental design is similar to the one just described except that the experimenter does not intervene to expose the experimental group to a proposed cause (like the hair-growing cream). Instead, the experimenter identifies a cause that a population is already exposed to and then constructs the experiment. For example, suppose you suspect that the asbestos panels and insulation in some old buildings cause cancer. Because it would not be ethical to expose people intentionally to something that might damage their health, you would search for already existing conditions in which people are being exposed to the asbestos. Once located, these individuals (or a representative



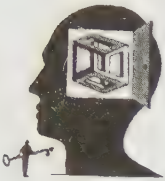
### CAUSE-TO-EFFECT EXPERIMENTS (WITHOUT INTERVENTION)

sample) could be used as the experimental group. You could then form a control group of individuals who are not exposed to asbestos but who match the experimental group in all other relevant respects. You could then investigate the health experiences of both groups over time, thereby evaluating the possible relationship between asbestos and cancer. The diagram on page 465 illustrates the procedure used in cause-to-effect experiments (without intervention).

**Effect-to-Cause Experiments** A final form of reasoning employing the controlled experimental design is known as the *effect-to-cause experiment*. In this case the experimenter works backward from an existing effect to a suspected cause. For example, imagine that you are investigating the claim by many Vietnam veterans that exposure to the chemical defoliant Agent Orange has resulted in significant health problems for them and for children born to them. Once again, you would not want to expose people to a potentially harmful substance just to test the hypothesis. And unlike the asbestos case we just examined, people are no longer being exposed to Agent Orange as they were during the war. As a result, investigating the claim involves beginning with the effect (health problems) and working back to the suspected cause (Agent Orange). In this case the target population would be Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange, so you would draw a representative sample from this group. You would form a matching control group from the population of Vietnam veterans who were not exposed to Agent Orange. Next, you would compare the incidence of illnesses claimed to have been caused by Agent Orange in the two groups and evaluate the proposed causal relation. The diagram below illustrates the procedure used in effect-to-cause experiments.



### THINKING ACTIVITY 11.4 *EVALUATING EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS*



Read the following experimental situations. For each situation

1. Describe the proposed causal relationship (the theory or hypothesis).
2. Identify which kind of experimental design was used.
3. Evaluate
  - a. The representativeness of the sample
  - b. The randomness of the division into experimental and control groups
4. Explain how well the experimental results support the proposed theory or hypothesis.

Canadian researchers led by D. G. Perrin of the department of pathology at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto have found an important biochemical difference in the bodies of children who died from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) compared with infants who died from other causes. According to the scientists, the research suggests that infants at high risk for SIDS may manufacture the brain chemical transmitter dopamine at abnormally high levels. Theoretically, if the results of the investigation are borne out, a child at risk might be treated with dopamine-blocking drugs as a preventive measure, but the scientists caution it is too early to consider doing that. "Just because [dopamine] is abnormal does not necessarily mean it's a primary cause," says Perrin. "It may be a secondary cause."

Perrin and his colleagues examined the carotid bodies of 13 SIDS babies and five infants who died from other causes. All but two of the SIDS babies had dopamine levels far in excess of those in the controls.

SIDS claims about ten thousand infants between two months and four months of age each year in the United States. All SIDS deaths involve the mysterious cessation of breathing during sleep.

A study released last week indicates that Type A individuals, who are characteristically impatient, competitive, insecure, and short-tempered, can halve their chances of having a heart attack by changing their behavior with the help of psychological counseling.

In 1978, scientists at Mt. Zion Hospital and Medical Center in San Francisco and Stanford University School of Education began their study of 862 predominantly male heart attack victims. Of this number, 592 received group counseling to ease their Type A behavior and improve their self-esteem. After three years, only 7 percent had another heart attack,

compared with 13 percent of a matched group of 270 subjects who received only cardiological advice. Among 328 men who continued with the counseling for the full three years, 79 percent reduced their Type A behavior. About half of the comparison group was similarly able to slow down and cope better with stress.

This is the first evidence “that a modification program aimed at Type A behavior actually helps to reduce coronary disease,” says Redford Williams of Duke University, an investigator of Type A behavior.

A new study, based on 2,745,149 deaths from natural causes, has found that men tend to die just before their birthdays, while women tend to die just after their birthdays. Thus an approaching birthday seems to prolong the life of women and precipitate death in men. The study, published in the journal *Psychosomatic Medicine*, found 3 percent more deaths than expected among women in the week after a birthday and a slight decline the week before. For men, deaths peaked just before birthdays and showed no rise above normal afterward.

“Experts in sleep behavior and sleep disorders have found that a majority of people are sleeping at least an hour to 90 minutes less each night than they should, based on a series of studies of several hundred college and graduate students between the ages of 18 and 30. In one representative experiment with young adults who were generally healthy and got an average of seven to eight hours sleep a night, sleep researchers discovered that 20 percent of these apparently normal students could fall asleep almost instantaneously throughout the day if allowed to lie down in a darkened room, evidence that they were sleep deprived. Researchers further discovered that even the students who seemed alert and did not quickly fall asleep under test conditions could benefit from more sleep. If they spent one week getting to bed an hour to 90 minutes earlier than usual, the students improved their performance markedly on psychological and cognitive tests. Such results seem to suggest that most people who think they are sleeping enough would be better off with an extra portion of rest.

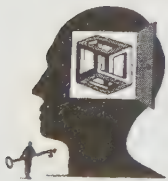
A survey of 5000 people by Stanley Coren found that while 15 percent of the population at age 10 was left-handed, there was a pronounced drop-off as people grew older, leaving 5 percent among 50-year-olds and less than 1 percent for those aged 80 and above. Where have all the lefties



gone? They seem to have died. Lefties have a shorter life expectancy than righties, by an average of 9 years in the general population, apparently due to the ills and accidents they are more likely to suffer by having to live in a “right-handed world.”

The ads seem too good to be true: Slap a patch on the arm, change it every day, and two or three months later, you’ve kicked the habit. However, the truth is more elusive. Studies submitted to the F.D.A. indicated that smokers who used nicotine patches for 8 to 12 weeks were about twice as likely to have quit at the end of that period as were those who used dummy patches without nicotine. But as any smoker will testify, quitting is easy; the problem is that starting up again is even easier. So smokers wonder whether the patches will conquer their craving for nicotine and help them quit permanently or whether they will have to continue to purchase the patches at a cost of \$300 for the 12-week supply. So far, research suggests that those who quit with the help of patches relapse at about the same rate as anyone else. In one series of follow-up studies, the share of individuals still smoke-free six months after they stopped using patches ranged from zero to 48 percent, as compared with a six-month success rate of zero to 40 percent for those who did not use them. Other studies indicate that success rates then continue to drop for at least a year, with patch users retaining some of their initial edge. Taken together, the figures suggest that the patches can help a small fraction of smokers. Each year 17 million Americans try to quit smoking, but only 1.3 million manage to do so. ◀

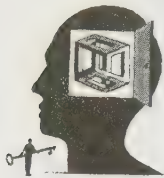
### THINKING ACTIVITY 11.5 *DESIGNING A SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT*



Construct an experimental design to investigate a potential causal relationship of your own choosing. Be sure that your experimental design follows the guidelines established:

- A clearly defined theory or hypothesis expressing a proposed relationship between a cause and an effect in a population of individuals
- Representative samples
- Selection into experimental and control groups
- A clear standard for evaluating the evidence for or against the theory or hypothesis ◀

## THINKING PASSAGE *DEVELOPING AN AIDS VACCINE*



Human history is filled with examples of misguided causal thinking—bleeding people’s veins and applying leeches to reduce fever, beating and torturing emotionally disturbed people to drive out the devils thought to possess them, sacrificing young women to ensure the goodwill of the gods, and so on. When the bubonic plague ravaged Europe in the fourteenth century, the lack of scientific understanding led to causal explanations like “God’s punishment of the unholy” and “the astrological position of the planets.”

Contrast this fourteenth-century plague with what some people have termed the plague of the twentieth century—acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). We now have the knowledge, reasoning, and technical capabilities to investigate the disease in an effective fashion, though no cure or preventative inoculation has yet been developed. Read the following article describing the scientific battle against AIDS and then answer the questions that follow.

### FOR A NATIONAL EFFORT TO DEVELOP A VACCINE TO COUNTERACT AIDS by Robert E. Pollack

The time has come for the Government to underwrite a nationwide effort to produce an effective vaccine against HTLV III, the virus that causes AIDS. Though a frightening new disease, AIDS is no longer so novel that such an effort would be premature.

Samples of the virus have been isolated and their entire sets of genes decoded. The human populations for testing and eventual inoculation with a vaccine exist and are ready to volunteer. Yet the communities of physicians, and of public and corporate researchers, seem unable to organize the process. Why is the nation unwilling or unable to expend the effort and money to launch an applied-biology and bioengineering effort to develop and test a vaccine?

Let’s examine what is known about viruses. Most viruses cannot “find” just any human cell; they have to attach to a cell’s surface, and the attachment has to be a specific match between a portion of the cell’s surface membrane and a portion of the virus’s coat. HTLV III is ordinary in its habits much like other viruses. It is remarkable only for the fastidious way in which it chooses the cell it will attach to, enter and take over.

HTLV III must find and attach to a particular kind of white blood cell. This sort of cell is the very one everyone’s body needs in order to recognize and reject a multiplicity of micro-organisms, fungi, parasites,

yeasts and bacteria. That is the reason AIDS patients suffer from so many different diseases. As the virus takes over these cells, the body loses its defenses and eventually succumbs to one or many of a host of infectious agents.

Two scientific reasons are given for the reluctance to begin a national effort to develop a vaccine. One is that AIDS might be caused by a family of closely related variants of the same virus and that therefore no vaccine could be effective. The other is that there are no animals suitable for initial testing of a vaccine and thus no way to be sure a vaccine is safe for testing in people.

It seems to me and to some colleagues that these objections, though sound, are not conclusive. The exquisite specificity of HTLV III's recognition of certain white blood cells suggests that all variants of the virus will have in common at least one part of their outer coat—the region that finds and binds to this specific kind of cell.

Gene-splicing is the answer to the second objection and the key to making a vaccine. HTLV III is a new virus, but its known properties so far suggest that it is not so exotic as to be beyond the grasp of recombinant DNA techniques. All the genes of more than one AIDS virus have been isolated and chemically identified. This knowledge should permit scientists to put genes from an AIDS virus into a bacterium. Once they are there, the bacterium, grown in large quantities, can be the source of material for testing as a vaccine. And vaccines produced this way would be totally incapable of causing AIDS.

In the absence of an animal model for AIDS, such vaccines could not now be tested in volunteers, because Government regulations require that new vaccines be first tested in an animal. These rules no longer make sense for vaccines produced by recombinant techniques.

There is at least one other reason for our nation's inability to act: irrational fear and hostility directed at a minority. The population at risk and ready to volunteer for testing is largely homosexual. Our political leaders apparently do not wish to be involved with this minority. As a result, the clock runs out on thousands of victims without even the beginning of an effort to develop the vaccine that might prevent new cases from occurring. This is a social disaster.

Consider what we could be doing. We have a population of homosexuals available for prospective study of such vaccines. These men, like the estimated million or so Americans who already have antibodies to HTLV III, are highly motivated to participate in the large-scale studies necessary to develop an optimal vaccine.

We have as well a population of perhaps 100,000\* people with what is known medically as “AIDS-related complex”—a syndrome in which a person has an AIDS virus in his blood but does not show the full set of symptoms characteristic of AIDS. In addition, there are perhaps 10,000 people with AIDS whose white [blood] cells are drastically reduced. These 10,000 have a currently irreversible disease, and many have repeatedly offered themselves for any experimental treatments.

A vaccine for any virus-caused cancer will have to be made by recombinant techniques in order to separate the gene for the vaccine from all cancer-causing genes in the virus. Therefore, if we proceed immediately to organize biotechnology for the production and testing of recombinant AIDS vaccines, we gain time on the eventual production of vaccines for leukemias, lymphomas and other human tumors that are likely to be caused by viruses.

All physicians have taken an oath to do no harm. But in fact they do harm by sitting quietly by, or referring AIDS victims to another physician or hoping the disease will quietly go away after it destroys a few thousand homosexual men and narcotics addicts. It is not enough to offer succor and solace. Physicians and scientists should lobby actively for a nationwide effort to develop an AIDS vaccine. ■

### *Questions for Analysis*

1. Explain the process by which the HTLV III virus causes the AIDS syndrome.
2. Construct an experimental design that would test the AIDS vaccine that Dr. Pollack thinks should be developed. Be sure that your experimental design follows the guidelines detailed in Thinking Activity 11.5 on page 469.
3. Dr. Pollack believes that a national effort to develop a vaccine to deal with the AIDS epidemic is overdue and states: “All physicians have taken an oath to do no harm. But in fact they do harm by sitting quietly by . . .” Explain whether you agree with this view or not and state the reasons that support your position. ◀

\*This figure represents the estimate in 1985. In the United States, 665,357 cases of AIDS had been reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as of June 30, 1998. (Editor’s note)



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## CAUSAL FALLACIES

Because causality plays such a dominant role in the way we make sense of the world, it is not surprising that people make many mistakes and errors in judgment in trying to determine causal relationships. The following are some of the most common fallacies associated with causality:

- Questionable cause
- Misidentification of the cause
- *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*
- Slippery slope

### *Questionable Cause*

The fallacy of *questionable cause* occurs when someone presents a causal relationship for which no real evidence exists. Superstitious beliefs, such as “If you break a mirror, you will have seven years of bad luck,” usually fall into this category. Some people feel that astrology, a system of beliefs tying one’s personality and fortunes in life to the position of the planets at the moment of birth, also falls into this category.

Consider the following passage from St. Augustine’s *Confessions*. Does it seem to support or deny the causal assertions of astrology? Why or why not?

Firminus had heard from his father that when his mother had been pregnant with him, a slave belonging to a friend of his father’s was also about to bear. It happened that since the two women had their babies at the same instant, the men were forced to cast exactly the same horoscope for each newborn child down to the last detail, one for his son, the other for the little slave. Yet Firminus, born to wealth in his parents’ house, had one of the more illustrious careers in life whereas the slave had no alleviation of his life’s burden.

Other examples of this fallacy include explanations like those given by fourteenth-century sufferers of the bubonic plague who claimed that “the Jews are poisoning the Christians’ wells.” This was particularly nonsensical since an equal percentage of Jews were dying of the plague as well. The evidence did not support the explanation.

### *Misidentification of the Cause*

In causal situations we are not always certain about what is causing what—in other words, what is the cause and what is the effect. *Misidentifying the cause* is easy to do. For example, which are the causes and which are the effects in the following pairs of items? Why?

- Poverty and alcoholism
- Headaches and tension
- Failure in school and personal problems
- Shyness and lack of confidence
- Drug dependency and emotional difficulties

Of course, sometimes a third factor is responsible for both of the effects we are examining. For example, the headaches and tension we are experiencing may both be the result of a third element—such as some new medication we are taking. When this occurs, we are said to commit the fallacy of *ignoring a common cause*. On the other hand, there also exists the fallacy of *assuming a common cause*—for example, assuming that both a sore toe and an earache stem from the same cause.

### *Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc*

The translation of the Latin phrase *post hoc ergo propter hoc* is “After it, therefore because of it.” It refers to those situations in which, because two things occur close together in time, we assume that one caused the other. For example, if your team wins the game each time you wear your favorite shirt, you might be tempted to conclude that the one event (wearing your favorite shirt) has some influence on the other event (winning the game). As a result, you might continue to wear this shirt “for good luck.” It is easy to see how this sort of mistaken thinking can lead to all sorts of superstitious beliefs.

Consider the following causal conclusion arrived at by Mark Twain’s fictional character Huckleberry Finn in the following passage. How would you analyze the conclusion that he comes to?

I’ve always reckoned that looking at the new moon over your left shoulder is one of the carelessest and foolishhest things a body can do. Old Hank Bunker done it once, and bragged about it; and in less than two years he got drunk and fell off a shot tower and spread himself out so that he was just a kind of layer. . . . But anyway, it all come of looking at the moon that way, like a fool.

Can you identify any of your own superstitious beliefs or practices that might have been the result of *post hoc* thinking?

## *Slippery Slope*

The causal fallacy of *slippery slope* is illustrated in the following advice:

Don't miss that first deadline, because if you do, it won't be long before you're missing all your deadlines. This will spread to the rest of your life, as you will be late for every appointment. This terminal procrastination will ruin your career, and friends and relatives will abandon you. You will end up a lonely failure who is unable to ever do anything on time.

Slippery slope thinking asserts that one undesirable action will inevitably lead to a worse action, which will necessarily lead to a worse one still, all the way down the "slippery slope" to some terrible disaster at the bottom. Although this progression may indeed happen, there is certainly no causal guarantee that it will. Create slippery slope scenarios for one of the following warnings:

1. If you get behind on one credit card payment . . .
2. If you fail that first test . . .
3. If you eat that first fudge square . . .

Review the causal fallacies just described and then identify and explain the reasoning pitfalls illustrated in the following examples:

1. The person who won the lottery says that she dreamed the winning numbers. I'm going to start writing down the numbers in my dreams.
2. Yesterday I forgot to take my vitamins, and I immediately got sick. That mistake won't happen again!
3. I'm warning you—if you start missing classes, it won't be long before you flunk out of school and ruin your future.
4. I always take the first seat in the bus. Today I took another seat, and the bus broke down. And you accuse me of being superstitious!
5. I think the reason I'm not doing well in school is because I'm just not interested. Also, I simply don't have enough time to study.

Many people want us to see the cause-and-effect relationships that they believe exist, and they often utilize questionable or outright fallacious reasoning. Consider the following examples:



*The fallacy of slippery slope thinking suggests that one undesirable action will inevitably lead to a worse action, which will necessarily lead to a worse one still, all the way down the "slippery slope" to some unavoidable terrible disaster at the bottom.*

1. Politicians assure us that a vote for them will result in "a chicken in every pot and a car in every garage."
2. Advertisers tell us that using this detergent will leave our wash "cleaner than clean, whiter than white."
3. Doctors tell us that eating a balanced diet will result in better health.
4. Educators tell us that a college degree is worth an average of \$830,000 additional income over an individual's life.
5. Scientists inform us that nuclear energy will result in a better life for all of us.

In each of these examples, certain causal claims are being made about how the world operates in an effort to persuade us to adopt a certain point of view. As critical thinkers, it is our duty to evaluate these various causal claims in an effort to figure out whether they are sensible ways of organizing the world.

Explain how you might go about evaluating whether each of the following causal claims makes sense.

- *Example:* Taking the right vitamins will improve health.
- *Evaluation:* Review the medical research that examines the effect of taking vitamins on health; speak to a nutritionist; speak to a doctor.



1. Sweet Smell deodorant will keep you drier all day long.
2. Allure perfume will cause people to be attracted to you.
3. Natural childbirth will result in a more fulfilling birth experience.
4. Aspirin Plus will give you faster, longer-lasting relief from headaches.
5. Listening to loud music will damage your hearing.

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## FALLACIES OF RELEVANCE

Many fallacious arguments appeal for support to factors that have little or nothing to do with the argument being offered. In these cases, false appeals substitute for sound reasoning and a critical examination of the issues. Such appeals, known as *fallacies of relevance*, include the following kinds of fallacious thinking:

- Appeal to authority
- Appeal to pity
- Appeal to fear
- Appeal to ignorance
- Appeal to personal attack

### *Appeal to Authority*

In Chapter 5, “Believing and Knowing,” we explored the ways in which we sometimes appeal to various authorities to establish our beliefs or prove our points. At that time, we noted that to serve as a basis for beliefs, authorities must have legitimate expertise in the area in which they are advising—like an experienced mechanic diagnosing a problem with your car. People, however, often appeal to authorities who are not qualified to give an expert opinion. Consider the reasoning in the following advertisements. Do you think the arguments are sound? Why or why not?

Hi. You’ve probably seen me out on the football field. After a hard day’s work crushing halfbacks and sacking quarterbacks, I like to settle down with a cold, smooth Maltz beer.

SONY. Ask anyone.

Over 11 million women will read this ad. Only 16 will own the coat.

Each of these arguments is intended to persuade us of the value of a product through the appeal to various authorities. In the first case, the authority is a well-known sports figure; in the second, the authority is large numbers of people; and in the third, the authority is a select few, appealing to our desire to be exclusive (“snob appeal”). Unfortunately, none of these authorities offers legitimate expertise about the product. Football players are not beer experts; large numbers of people are often misled; exclusive groups of people are frequently mistaken in their beliefs. To evaluate authorities properly, we have to ask:

- What are the professional credentials on which the authorities’ expertise is based?
- Is their expertise in the area they are commenting on?

### *Appeal to Pity*

Consider the reasoning in the following arguments. Do you think that the arguments are sound? Why or why not?

I know that I haven’t completed my term paper, but I really think that I should be excused. This has been a very difficult semester for me. I caught every kind of flu that came around. In addition, my brother has a drinking problem, and this has been very upsetting to me. Also, my dog died.

I admit that my client embezzled money from the company, your honor. However, I would like to bring several facts to your attention. He is a family man, with a wonderful wife and two terrific children. He is an important member of the community. He is active in the church, coaches a little league baseball team, and has worked very hard to be a good person who cares about people. I think that you should take these things into consideration in handing down your sentence.

In each of these arguments, the reasons offered to support the conclusions may indeed be true. They are not, however, relevant to the conclusion. Instead of providing evidence that supports the conclusion, the reasons are designed to make us feel sorry for the person involved and therefore agree with the conclusion out of sympathy. Although these appeals are often effective, the arguments are not sound. The probability of a conclusion can be established only by reasons that support and are relevant to the conclusion.

### *Appeal to Fear*

Consider the reasoning in the following arguments. Do you think that the arguments are sound? Why or why not?

I'm afraid I don't think you deserve a raise. After all, there are many people who would be happy to have your job at the salary you are currently receiving. I would be happy to interview some of these people if you really think that you are underpaid.

If you continue to disagree with my interpretation of *The Catcher in the Rye*, I'm afraid you won't get a very good grade on your term paper.

In both of these arguments, the conclusions being suggested are supported by an appeal to fear, not by reasons that provide evidence for the conclusions. In the first case, the threat is that if you do not forgo your salary demands, your job may be in jeopardy. In the second case, the threat is that if you do not agree with the teacher's interpretation, you will fail the course. In neither instance are the real issues—Is a salary increase deserved? Is the student's interpretation legitimate?—being discussed.

People who appeal to fear to support their conclusions are interested only in prevailing, regardless of which position might be more justified.

### *Appeal to Ignorance*

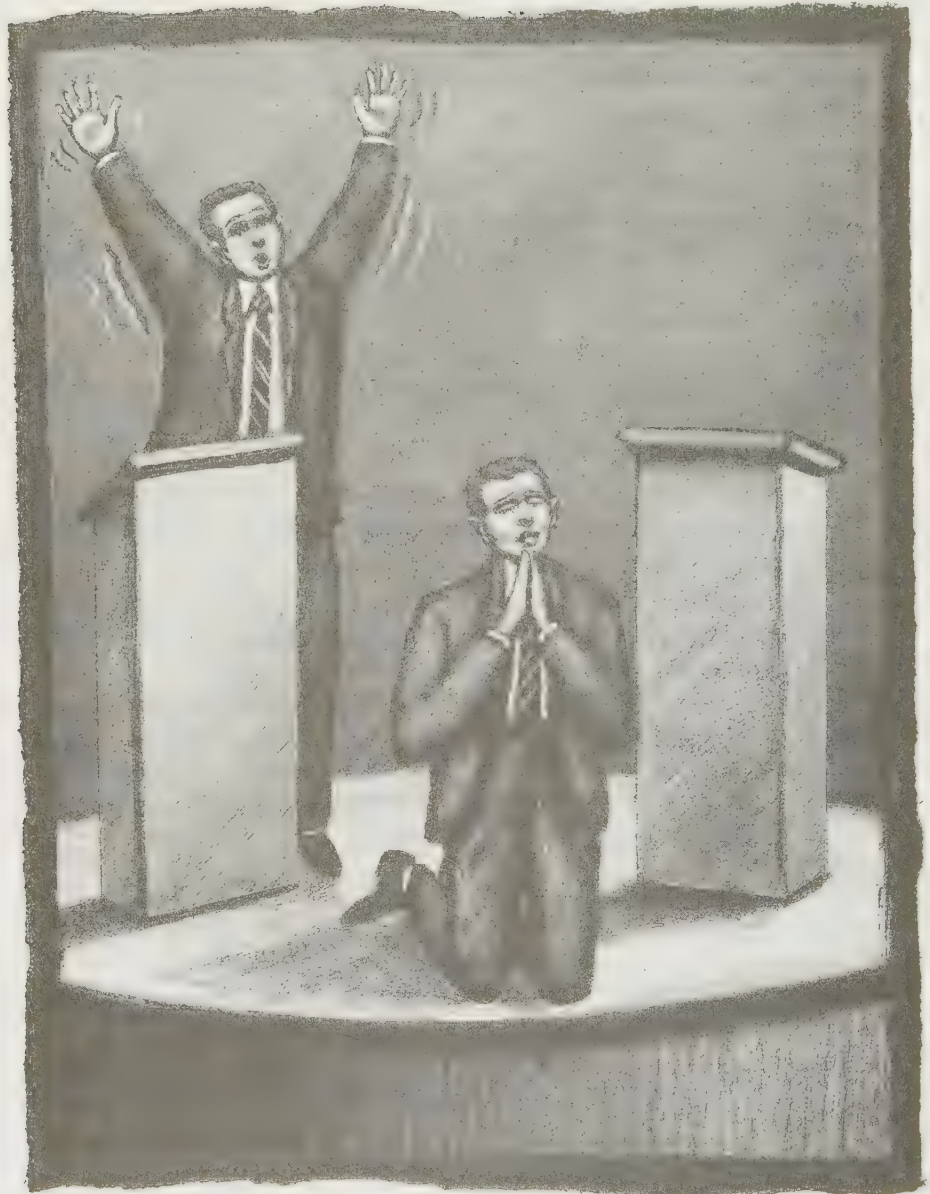
Consider the reasoning in the following arguments. Do you think that the arguments are sound? Why or why not?

You say that you don't believe in God. But can you prove that He doesn't exist? If not, then you have to accept the conclusion that He does in fact exist.

Greco Tires are the best. No others have been proved better.

"With me, abortion is not a problem of religion. It's a problem of the Constitution. I believe that until and unless someone can establish that the unborn child is not a living human being, then that child is already protected by the Constitution, which guarantees life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to all of us."

—Ronald Reagan



*Instead of sound reasoning and a critical examination of the issues, fallacies of false appeal substitute emotional appeals to irrelevant factors like pity, fear, authority, ignorance, and personal attack.*



When this argument form is used, the person offering the conclusion is asking his or her opponent to *disprove* the conclusion. If the opponent is unable to do so, then the conclusion is asserted to be true. This argument form is not valid because it is the job of the person proposing the argument to prove the conclusion. Simply because an opponent cannot *disprove* the conclusion offers no evidence that the conclusion is in fact justified. In the first example, for instance, the fact that someone cannot prove that God does not exist provides no persuasive reason for believing that he does.

### *Appeal to Personal Attack*

Consider the reasoning in the following arguments. Do you think that the arguments are valid? Why or why not?

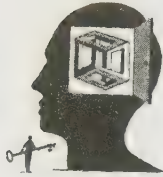
Your opinion on this issue is false. It's impossible to believe anything you say.

How can you have an intelligent opinion about abortion? You're not a woman, so this is a decision that you'll never have to make.

This argument form has been one of the most frequently used fallacies through the ages. Its effectiveness results from ignoring the issues of the argument and focusing instead on the personal qualities of the person making the argument. By trying to discredit the other person, the effort is being made to discredit the argument—no matter what reasons are offered. This fallacy is also referred to as the *ad hominem* argument, which means “to the man” rather than to the issue, and *poisoning the well*, because we are trying to ensure that any water drawn from our opponent's well will be treated as undrinkable.

The effort to discredit can take two forms, as illustrated in the preceding examples. The fallacy can be *abusive* in the sense that we are directly attacking the credibility of our opponent (as in the first example). In addition, the fallacy can also be *circumstantial* in the sense that we are claiming that the person's circumstances, not character, render his or her opinion so biased or uninformed that it cannot be treated seriously (as in the second example). Other examples of the circumstantial form of the fallacy would include disregarding the views on nuclear plant safety given by an owner of one of the plants or ignoring the views of a company comparing a product it manufactures with competing products.

### THINKING ACTIVITY 11.6 *IDENTIFYING FALLACIES*



Locate (or develop) an example of each of the following kinds of false appeals. For each example, explain why you think that the appeal is not warranted.

1. Appeal to authority
2. Appeal to pity
3. Appeal to fear
4. Appeal to ignorance
5. Appeal to personal attack ◀

### THE CRITICAL THINKER'S GUIDE TO REASONING

This book has provided you with the opportunity to explore and develop many of your critical thinking and reasoning abilities. As you have seen, these abilities are complex and difficult to master. The process of becoming an accomplished critical thinker and effective reasoner is a challenging quest that requires ongoing practice and reflection. This section will present a critical thinking/reasoning model that will help you pull together the important themes of this book into an integrated perspective. This model is illustrated on page 486. In order to become familiar with the model, you will be thinking through an important issue that confronts every human being: "Are people capable of choosing freely?"

#### *What Is My Initial Point of View?*

Reasoning always begins with a point of view. As a critical thinker, it is important for you to take thoughtful positions and express your views with confidence. Using this statement as a starting point, respond as specifically as you can:

- *I believe (or don't believe) that people can choose freely because . . .*

Here is a sample response:

*I believe that people are capable of choosing freely because when I am faced with choosing among a number of possibilities, I really have the feeling that it is up to me to make the choice that I want to.*

### ***How Can I Define My Point of View More Clearly?***

After stating your initial point of view, the next step is to define the issues more clearly and specifically. As you have seen, the language that we use has multiple levels of meaning, and it is often not clear precisely what meaning(s) people are expressing. To avoid misunderstandings and sharpen your own thinking, it is essential that you clarify the key concepts as early as possible. In this case, the central concept is "choosing freely." Respond by beginning with the following statement:

- *From my point of view, the concept of "choosing freely" means . . .*

Here is a sample response:

*From my point of view, the concept of "choosing freely" means that when you are faced with a number of alternatives, you are able to make your selection based solely on what you decide, not because you are being forced by other influences.*

### ***What Is an Example of My Point of View?***

Once your point of view is clarified, it's useful to provide an example that illustrates your meaning. As you saw in Chapter 7, the process of forming and defining concepts involves the process of *generalizing* (identifying general qualities) and the process of *interpreting* (locating specific examples). Respond to the issue we have been considering by beginning with the following statement:

- *An example of a free choice I made (or was unable to make) is . . .*

Here is a sample response:

*An example of a free choice I made was deciding what area to major in. There are a number of career directions I could have chosen to go out with, but I chose my major entirely on my own, without being forced by other influences.*

## *What Is the Origin of My Point of View?*

To fully understand and critically evaluate your point of view, it's important to review its history. How did the point of view develop? Have you always held this view, or did it develop over time? This sort of analysis will help you understand how your perceiving "lenses" regarding this issue were formed. Respond to the issue of free choice by beginning with the following statement:

- *I formed my belief regarding free choice . . .*

Here is a sample response:

*I used to believe that everything happened because it had to, because it was determined. Then, when I was in high school, I got involved with the "wrong crowd" and developed some bad habits. I stopped doing schoolwork and even stopped attending most classes. I was on the brink of failing out when I suddenly came to my senses and said to myself, "This isn't what I want for my life." Through sheer willpower, I turned everything around. I changed my friends, improved my habits, and ultimately graduated with flying colors. From that time on I knew that I had the power of free choice and that it was up to me to make the right choices.*

## *What Are My Assumptions?*

Assumptions are beliefs, often unstated, that underlie your point of view. Many disputes occur and remain unresolved because the people involved do not recognize or express their assumptions. For example, in the very emotional debate over abortion, when people who are opposed to abortion call their opponents "murderers," they are assuming the fetus, at *any* stage of development from the fertilized egg onward, is a "human life," since murder refers to the taking of a human life. On the other hand, when people in favor of abortion call their opponents "moral fascists," they are assuming that antiabortionists are merely interested in imposing their narrow moral views on others.

Thus it's important for all parties to identify clearly the assumptions that form the foundation of their points of view. They may still end up disagreeing, but at least they will know what they are arguing about. Thinking about the issue that we have been exploring, respond by beginning with the following statement:

- *When I say that I believe (or don't believe) in free choice, I am assuming . . .*

Here is a sample response:



*When I say that I believe in free choice, I am assuming that people are often presented with different alternatives to choose from, and I am also assuming that they are able to select freely any of these alternatives independent of any influences.*

### ***What Are the Reasons, Evidence, and Arguments That Support My Point of View?***

Everybody has opinions. What distinguishes informed opinions from uninformed opinions is the quality of the reasons, evidence, and arguments that support the opinions. Respond to the issue of free choice by beginning with the following statement:

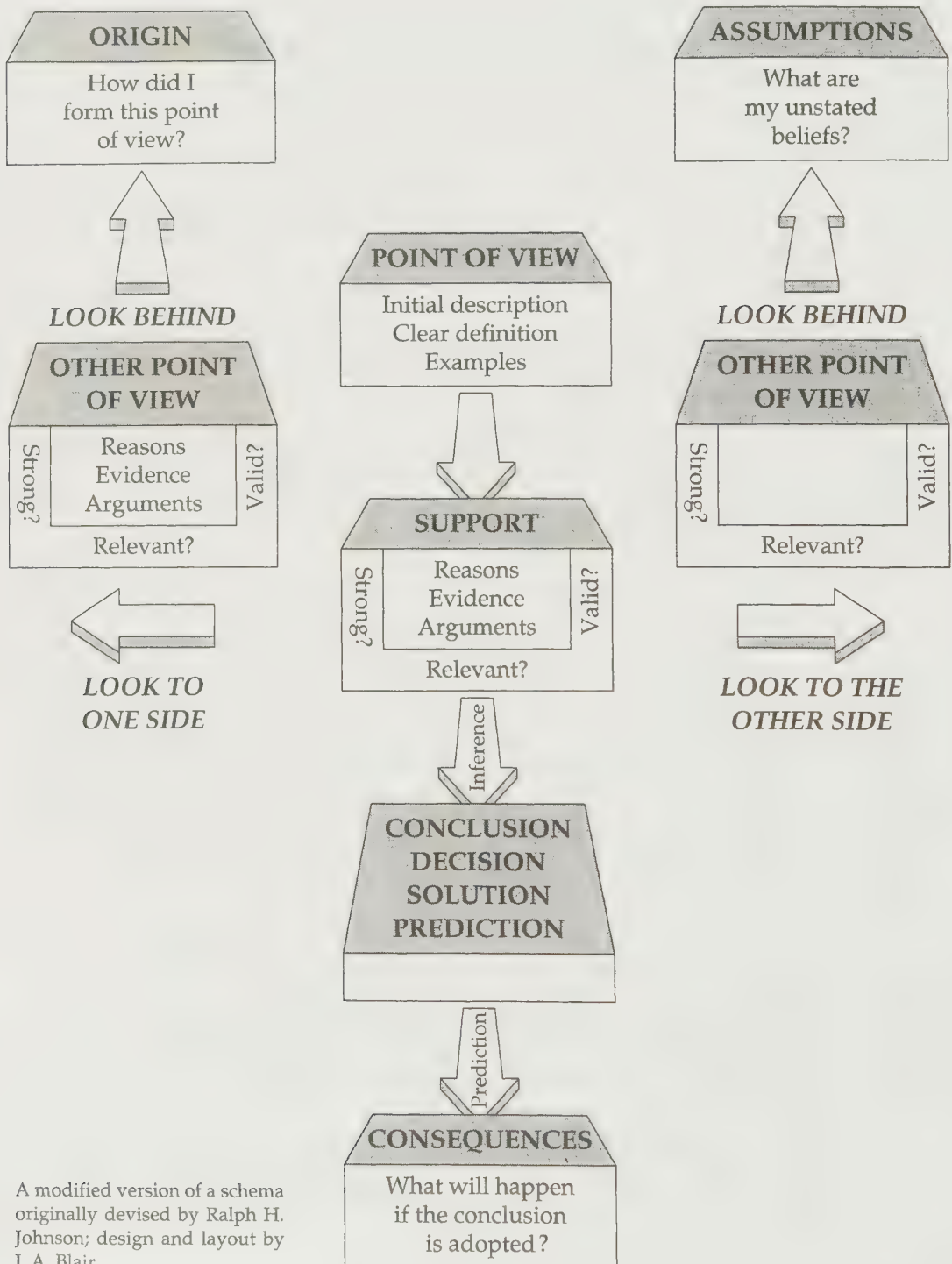
- *There are a variety of reasons, evidence, and arguments that support my belief (or disbelief) in free choice. First . . . Second . . . Third . . .*

Here is a sample response:

*There are a variety of reasons, evidence, and arguments that support my belief in free choice. First, I have a very strong and convincing personal intuition when I am making choices that my choices are free. Second, freedom is tied to responsibility. If people make free choices, then they are responsible for the consequences of their choices. Since we often hold people responsible, that means that we believe that their choices are free. Third, if people are not free, and all of their choices are determined by external forces, then life would have little purpose and there would be no point in trying to improve ourselves. But we do believe that life has purpose and we do try to improve ourselves, suggesting that we also believe that our choices are free.*

### ***What Are Other Points of View on This Issue?***

One of the hallmarks of critical thinkers is that they strive to view situations from perspectives other than their own, to “think empathetically” within other viewpoints, particularly those of people who disagree with their own. If we stay entrenched in our own narrow ways of viewing the world, the development of our minds will be severely limited. This is the only way to achieve a deep and full understanding of life’s complexities. In working to understand other points of view, we need to identify the reasons, evidence, and arguments



A modified version of a schema originally devised by Ralph H. Johnson; design and layout by J. A. Blair.

that have brought people to these conclusions. Respond to the issue we have been analyzing by beginning with the following statement:

- *A second point of view on this issue might be . . . A third point of view on this issue might be . . .*

Here is a sample response:

*A second point of view on this issue might be that many of our choices are conditioned by experiences that we have had in ways that we are not even aware of. For example, you might choose a career because of someone you admire or because of the expectations of others, although you may be unaware of these influences on your decision. Or you might choose to date someone because he or she reminds you of someone from your past, although you believe you are making a totally free decision. A third point of view on this issue might be that our choices are influenced by people around us, although we may not be fully aware of it. For example, we may go along with a group decision of our friends, mistakenly thinking that we are making an independent choice.*

### ***What Is My Conclusion, Decision, Solution, or Prediction?***

The ultimate purpose of reasoning is to reach an informed and successful conclusion, decision, solution, or prediction. Chapters 1 and 3 described reasoning approaches for making decisions and solving problems; Chapters 2 and 5 analyzed reaching conclusions; Chapter 9 explored the inferences we use to make predictions. With respect to the sample issue we have been considering—determining whether we can make free choices—the goal is to achieve a thoughtful conclusion. This is a complex process of analysis and synthesis in which we consider all points of view; evaluate the supporting reasons, evidence, and arguments; and then construct our most informed conclusion. Respond to our sample issue by using the following statement as a starting point:

- *After examining different points of view and critically evaluating the reasons, evidence, and arguments that support the various perspectives, my conclusion about free choice is . . .*

Here is a sample response:

*After examining different points of view and critically evaluating the reasons, evidence, and arguments that support the various perspectives, my conclusion*

*about free choice is that we are capable of making free choices but that our freedom is sometimes limited. For example, many of our actions are conditioned by our past experience, and we are often influenced by other people without being aware of it. In order to make free choices, we need to become aware of these influences and then decide what course of action we want to choose. As long as we are unaware of these influences, they can limit our ability to make free, independent choices.*

### What Are the Consequences?

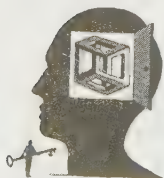
The final step in the reasoning process is to determine the *consequences* of our conclusion, decision, solution, or prediction. The consequences refer to what is likely to happen if our conclusion is adopted. Looking ahead in this fashion is helpful not simply for anticipating the future but also for evaluating the present. Identify the consequences of your conclusion regarding free choice by beginning with the following statement:

- *The consequences of believing (or disbelieving) in free choice are . . .*

Here is a sample response:

*The consequences of believing in free choice are increasing personal responsibility and showing people how to increase their freedom. The first consequence is that if people are able to make free choices, then they are responsible for the results of their choices. They can't blame other people, bad luck, or events "beyond their control." They have to accept responsibility. The second consequence is that although our freedom can be limited by influences of which we are unaware, we can increase our freedom by becoming aware of these influences and then deciding what we want to do. On the other hand, if people are not able to make free choices, then they are not responsible for what they do, nor are they able to increase their freedom. This could lead people to adopt an attitude of resignation and apathy.*

### THINKING ACTIVITY 11.7 APPLYING THE "GUIDE TO REASONING"



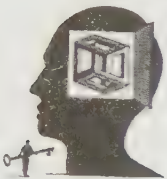
Identify an important issue in which you are interested and apply "The Critical Thinker's Guide to Reasoning" to analyze it:

- What is my initial point of view?
- How can I define my point of view more clearly?
- What is an example of my point of view?



- What is the origin of my point of view?
- What are my assumptions?
- What are the reasons, evidence, and arguments that support my point of view?
- What are other points of view on this issue?
- What is my conclusion, decision, solution, or prediction?
- What are the consequences? ◀

### THINKING PASSAGE *THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT AUTHORITY*



The following reading selection by John Sabini and Maury Silver demonstrates graphically the destructive effects of *failing* to think critically and suggests ways to avoid these failures. After reading this provocative selection, answer the questions that follow.

#### CRITICAL THINKING AND OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY by John Sabini and Maury Silver

In his 1974 book, *Obedience to Authority*, Stanley Milgram reports experiments on destructive obedience. In these experiments the subjects are faced with a dramatic choice, one apparently involving extreme pain and perhaps injury to someone else. When the subject arrives at the laboratory, the experimenter tells him (or her) and another subject—a pleasant, avuncular, middle-aged gentleman (actually an actor)—that the study concerns the effects of punishment on learning. Through a rigged drawing, the lucky subject wins the role of teacher and the experimenter's confederate becomes the "learner."

In the next stage of the experiment, the teacher and learner are taken to an adjacent room; the learner is strapped into a chair and electrodes are attached to his arm. It appears impossible for the learner to escape. While strapped in the chair, the learner diffidently mentions that he has a heart condition. The experimenter replies that while the shocks may be painful, they cause no permanent tissue damage. The teacher is instructed to read to the learner a list of word pairs, to test him on the list, and to administer punishment—an electric shock—whenever the learner errs. The teacher is given a sample shock of 45 volts (the only real shock administered in the course of the experiment). The experimenter instructs the teacher to increase the level of shock one step on the shock generator for each mistake. The generator has thirty switches labeled from 15 to 450 volts. Beneath these voltage readings are labels ranging from "SLIGHT SHOCK" to "DANGER: SEVERE SHOCK," and finally "XX."

The experiment starts routinely. At the fifth shock level, however, the confederate grunts in annoyance, and by the time the eighth shock level is reached, he shouts that the shocks are becoming painful. Upon reaching the tenth level (150 volts), he cries out, "Experimenter, get me out of here! I won't be in the experiment any more! I refuse to go on!" This response makes plain the intensity of the pain and underscores the learner's right to be released. At the 270-volt level, the learner's response becomes an agonized scream, and at 300 volts the learner refuses to answer further. When the voltage is increased from 300 volts to 330 volts, the confederate shrieks in pain at each shock and gives no answer. From 330 volts on, the learner is heard from no more, and the teacher has no way of knowing whether the learner is still conscious or, for that matter, alive (the teacher also knows that the experimenter cannot tell the condition of the victim since the experimenter is in the same room as the teacher).

Typically the teacher attempts to break off the experiment many times during the session. When he tries to do so, the experimenter instructs him to continue. If he refuses, the experimenter insists, finally telling him, "You must continue. You have no other choice." If the subject still refuses, the experimenter ends the experiment.

We would expect that at most only a small minority of the subjects, a cross section of New Haven residents, would continue to shock beyond the point where the victim screams in pain and demands to be released. We certainly would expect that very, very few people would continue to the point of administering shocks of 450 volts. Indeed, Milgram asked a sample of psychiatrists and a sample of adults with various occupations to predict whether they would obey the orders of the experimenter. All of the people asked claimed that they would disobey at some point. Aware that people would be unwilling to admit that they themselves would obey such an unreasonable and unconscionable order, Milgram asked another sample of middle-class adults to predict how far other people would go in such a procedure. The average prediction was that perhaps one person in a thousand would continue to the end. The prediction was wrong. In fact, 65 percent (26/40) of the subjects obeyed to the end.

It is clear to people who are not in the experiment what they should do. The question is, *What features of the experimental situation make this clear issue opaque to subjects?* Our aim is to suggest some reasons for such a failure of thinking and action and to suggest ways that people might be trained to avoid such failures—not only in the experiment, of course, but in our practical, moral lives as well. What are some of the sources of the failure?

*The experimental conditions involve entrapment, and gradual entrapment affects critical thought.* One important feature inducing obedience is the gradual escalation of the shock. Although subjects in the end administered 450-volt shocks, which is clearly beyond the limits of common morality and, indeed, common sense, they began by administering 15-volt shocks, which is neither. Not only did they begin with an innocuous shock, but it increased in innocuous steps of 15 volts. This gradualness clouds clear thinking: we are prepared by our moral training to expect moral problems to present themselves categorically, with good and evil clearly distinguished. But here they were not. By administering the first shock, subjects did two things at once—one salient, the other implicit. They administered a trivial shock, a morally untroublesome act, and they in that same act committed themselves to a policy and procedure which ended in clear evil.

Surely in everyday life, becoming entrapped by gradual increases in commitment is among the most common ways for us to find ourselves engaging in immoral acts, not to mention simple folly. The corrective cannot be, of course, refusing to begin on any path which *might* lead to immorality, but rather to foresee where paths are likely to lead, and to arrange for ourselves points beyond which we will not go. One suspects that had the subjects committed themselves—publicly—to some shock level they would not exceed, they would not have found themselves pushing the 450-volt lever. We cannot expect to lead, or expect our young to lead, lives without walking on slopes: our only hope is to reduce their slipperiness.

*Distance makes obedience easier.* Another force sustaining obedience was the *distance* between the victim and the subject. Indeed, in one condition of the experiment, subjects were moved physically closer to the victim; in one condition they had to hold his hand on the shock plate (through Mylar insulation to protect the teachers from shock). Here twelve out of forty subjects continued to the end, roughly half the number that did so when the subjects were farther from their victim.

Being closer to the victim did not have its effect by making subjects think more critically or by giving them more information. Rather it intensified their *discomfort* at the victim's pain. Still, being face to face with someone they were hurting probably caused them at least to focus on their victim, which might well be a first step in their taking seriously the pain they were causing him.

*Both the experimenter's presence and the objective requirements of the situation influenced decisions to obey authority.* The experimenter's presence is

crucial to the subjects' obedience. In one version of the experiment he issued his commands at a distance, over the phone, and obedience was significantly reduced—to nine out of forty cases. The experimenter, then, exerts powerful *social influence* over the subjects.

One way to think about the experimenter's influence is to suppose that subjects uncritically cede control of their behavior to him. But this is too simple. We suggest that if the experimenter were to have told the subjects, for example, to shine his shoes, every subject would have refused. They would have refused because shining shoes is not a sensible command within the experimental context. Thus, the experimenter's ability to confuse and control subjects follows from his issuing commands which make sense given the ostensible purpose of the experiment; he was a guide, for them, to the experiment's objective requirements.

This interpretation of the experimenter's *role* is reinforced by details of his behavior. For example, his language and demeanor were cold—bureaucratic rather than emotional or personal. The subjects were led to see his commands to them as his dispassionate interpretations of something beyond them all: the requirements of the experiment.

*Embarrassment plays a key role in decisions to obey authority.* The experimenter entrapped subjects in another way. Subjects could not get out of the experiment without having to explain and justify their abandoning their duty to the experiment and to him. And how were they to do this?

Some subjects attempted to justify their leaving by claiming that they could not bear to go on, but such appeals to "personal reasons" were rebutted by the experimenter's reminding them of their duty to stay. If the subjects could not escape the experiment by such claims, then how could they escape? *They could fully escape his power only by confronting him on moral grounds.* It is worth noting that this is something that virtually none of the hundreds of subjects who took part in one condition or another fully did. Failing to address the experimenter in moral terms, even "disobedient" subjects just passively resisted; they stayed in their seats refusing to continue until the experimenter declared the experiment over. They did *not* do things we might expect them to: leave, tell the experimenter off, release the victim from his seat, and so on. Why did even the disobedient subjects not confront the experimenter?

One reason seems too trivial to mention: confronting the experimenter would be embarrassing. This trivial fact may have much to do with the subjects' obedience. To confront the experimenter directly, on moral grounds, would be to disrupt in a profound way implicit expectations



that grounded this particular, and indeed most, social interaction: namely, that the subject and experimenter would behave as competent moral actors. Questioning these expectations is on some accounts, at least, the source of embarrassment.

Subjects in Milgram's experiment probably did not realize that it was in part embarrassment that [was] keeping them in line. Had they realized that—had they realized that they were torturing someone to spare themselves embarrassment—they might well have chosen to withstand the embarrassment to secure the victim's release. But rather we suspect that subjects experience their anticipation of embarrassment as a nameless force, a distressing emotion they were not able to articulate. Thus the subjects found themselves unable to confront the experimenter on moral grounds and unable to comprehend why they could not confront the experimenter.

*Emotional states affect critical thought.* Obviously the emotions the subjects experienced because of the embarrassment they were avoiding and the discomfort produced by hearing the cries of the victim affected their ability to reason critically. We do not know much about the effects of emotion on cognition, but it is plausible that it has at least one effect—a focusing of attention. Subjects seem to suffer from what Milgram has called "Tunnel Vision": they restricted their focus to the technical requirements of the experimental task, for these, at least, were clear. This restriction of attention is both a consequence of being in an emotional state more generally, and it is a strategy subjects used to avoid unwanted emotional intrusions. This response to emotion is, no doubt, a formidable obstacle to critical thought. To reject the experimenter's commands, subjects had to view their situation in a perspective different from the technical one the experimenter offered them. But their immediate emotional state made it particularly difficult for them to do just that: to look at their own situation from a broader, moral perspective.

How can we train individuals to avoid destructive obedience? Our analysis leads to the view that obedience in the Milgram experiment is not primarily a result of a failure of knowledge, or at least knowledge of the crucial issue of what is right or wrong to do in this circumstance. People do not need to be told that torturing an innocent person is something they should not do—even in the context of the experiment. Indeed, when the experimenter turns his back, most subjects are able to apply their moral principles and disobey. The subjects' problem instead is not knowing how to break off, how to make the moral response without social stickiness. If

the subjects' defect is not primarily one of thinking correctly, then how is education, even education in critical thinking, to repair the defect? We have three suggestions.

First, we must teach people how to confront authority. We should note as a corollary to this effort that teaching has a wide compass: we teach people how to ride bikes, how to play the piano, how to make a sauce. Some teaching of how to do things we call education: we teach students how to do long division, how to parse sentences, how to solve physics problems. We inculcate these skills in students not by, or not only by, giving them facts or even strategies to remember, but also by giving them certain sorts of experiences, by correcting them when they err, and so on. An analogy would be useful here. Subjects in the Milgram experiment suffered not so much from a failure to remember that as center fielders they should catch fly balls as they did from an inability to do so playing under lights at night, with a great deal of wind, and when there is ambiguity about whether time-out has been called. To improve the players' ability to shag fly balls, in game conditions, we recommend practice rather than lectures, and the closer the circumstances of practice to the conditions of the actual game, the more effective the practice is likely to be.

Good teachers from Socrates on have known that the intellect must be trained; one kind of training is in criticizing authority. We teachers are authorities and hence can provide practice. Of course, we can only do that if we *remain* authorities. Practice at criticizing us if we do not respect our own authority is of little use. We do not have a recipe for being an authority who at the same time encourages criticism, but we do know that is what is important. And sometimes we can tell when we are either not encouraging criticism or when we have ceased being an authority. Both are equally damaging.

Practice with the Milgram situation might help too; it might help for students to "role play" the subjects' plight. If nothing else, doing this might bring home in a forcible way the embarrassment that subjects faced in confronting authority. It might help them develop ways of dealing with this embarrassment. Certainly, it would at least teach them that doing the morally right thing does not always "feel" right, comfortable, natural. There is no evidence about whether such experiences generalize, but perhaps they do.

If they are to confront authority assertively, individuals must also be taught to use social pressure in the service of personal values. Much of current psychology and education sees thought, even critical thought, as something that goes on within individuals. But we know better than this.

Whether it be in science, law, or the humanities, scholarship is and must be a public, social process. To train subjects to think critically is to train them to expose their thinking to others, to open *themselves* to criticism, from their peers as well as from authority. We insist on this in scholarship because we know that individual thinking, even the best of it, is prey to distortions of all kinds, from mere ignorance to "bad faith."

Further, the support of others is important in another way. We know that subjects who saw what they took to be two other naive subjects disobey, and thus implicitly criticize the action of continuing, were very likely to do so themselves. A subject's sense that the experimenter had the correct reading was undermined by the counter reading offered by the "other subjects." Public reinforcement of our beliefs can liberate us from illegitimate pressure. The reason for this is twofold.

Agreement with others clarifies the cognitive issue and helps us see the morally or empirically right answer to questions. But it also can have another effect—a nonrational one.

We have claimed that part of the pressure subjects faced in disobeying was produced by having to deal with the embarrassment that might emerge from confrontation. Social support provides a counter-pressure. Had the subjects committed themselves publicly to disobedience before entering the experiment then they could have countered pressures produced by disobedience (during the experiment) by considering the embarrassment of admitting to others (after the experiment) that they had obeyed. Various self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and Weight Watchers teach individuals to manage social pressures to serve good ends.

Social pressures are forces in our lives whether we concede them or not. The rational person, the person who would keep his action in accord with his values, must learn to face or avoid those pressures when they act to degrade his action, but equally important he ought to learn to *employ* the pressure of public commitment, the pressure implicit in making clear to others what he values, in the service of his values.

Students should know about the social pressures that operate on them. They should also learn how to use those pressures to support their own values. One reason we teach people to think critically is so that they may take charge of their own creations. We do not withhold from engineers who would create buildings knowledge about gravity or vectors or stresses. Rather we teach them to enlist this knowledge in their support.

A second area requires our attention. We need to eliminate intellectual illusions fostering nonintellectual obedience. These are illusions about human nature which the Milgram experiment renders transparent. None



of these illusions is newly discovered; others have noticed them before. But the Milgram experiment casts them in sharp relief.

The most pernicious of these illusions is the belief, perhaps implicit, that only evil people do evil things and that evil announces itself. This belief, in different guises, bewildered the subjects in several ways.

First, the experimenter looks and acts like the most reasonable and rational of people: a person of authority in an important institution. All of this is, of course, irrelevant to the question of whether his commands are evil, but it does not seem so to subjects. The experimenter had no personally corrupt motive in ordering subjects to continue, for he wanted nothing more of them than to fulfill the requirements of the experiment. So the experimenter was not seen as an evil man, as a man with corrupt desires. He was a man, like Karl Adolf Eichmann, who ordered them to do evil because he saw that evil as something required of him (and of them) by the requirements of the situation they faced together. Because we expect our morality plays to have temptation and illicit desire arrayed against conscience, our ability to criticize morally is subverted when we find evil instructions issued by someone moved by, of all things, duty. [For a fuller discussion of this point, see Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1965), where the issue is placed in the context of the Holocaust.]

And just as the experimenter escaped the subjects' moral criticism because he was innocent of evil desire, the subjects escaped their own moral criticism because *they too* were free of evil intent: they did not *want* to hurt the victim; they really did not. Further, some subjects, at least, took action to relieve the victim's plight—many protested the experimenter's commands, many tried to give the victim hints about the right answers—thus further dramatizing their purity of heart. And because they acted out of duty rather than desire, the force of their conscience against their own actions was reduced. But, of course, none of this matters in the face of the evil done.

The "good-heartedness" of people, their general moral quality, is something very important to us, something to which we, perhaps rightly, typically pay attention. But if we are to think critically about the morality of our own and others' acts, we must see through this general fact about people to assess the real moral quality of the acts they do or are considering doing.

A second illusion from which the subjects suffered was a confusion about the notion of responsibility. Some subjects asked the experimenter who was responsible for the victim's plight. And the experimenter replied



that he was. We, and people asked to predict what they would do in the experiment, see that this is nonsense. We see that the experimenter cannot discharge the subjects' responsibility—no more than the leader of a bank-robbing gang can tell his cohorts, "Don't worry. If we're caught, I'll take full responsibility." We are all conspirators when we participate in planning and executing crimes.

Those in charge have the right to assign *technical* responsibility to others, responsibility for executing parts of a plan, but moral responsibility cannot be given, taken away, or transferred. Still, these words—mere words—on the part of the experimenter eased subjects' "sense of responsibility." So long as the institutions of which we are a part are moral, the need to distinguish technical from moral responsibility need not arise. When those institutions involve wanton torture, we are obliged to think critically about this distinction.

There is a third illusion illustrated in the Milgram experiment. When subjects threatened to disobey, the experimenter kept them in line with prods, the last of which was, "You have no choice; you must go on." Some subjects fell for this, believed that they had no choice. But this is also nonsense. There may be cases in life when we *feel* that we have no choice, but we know we always do. Often feeling we have no choice is really a matter of believing that the cost of moral action is greater than we are willing to bear—in the extreme we may not be willing to offer our lives, and sometimes properly so. Sometimes we use what others have done to support the claim that we have no choice; indeed, some students interpret the levels of obedience in the Milgram experiment as proof that the subjects had no choice. But we all know they did. Even in extreme situations, we have a choice, whether we choose to exercise it or not. The belief that our role, our desires, our past, or the actions of others preclude our acting morally is a convenient but illusory way of distancing ourselves from the evil that surrounds us. It is an illusion from which we should choose to disabuse our students. ■

### Questions for Analysis

1. The authors of this article describe the reasons they believe that the majority of subjects in the Stanley Milgram experiment were willing to inflict apparent pain and injury on an innocent person. Explain what you believe were the most significant reasons for this disturbing absence of critical thinking and moral responsibility.

2. The authors argue that the ability to think critically must be developed within a social context, that we must expose our thinking to the criticism of others because "individual thinking, even the best of it, is prey to distortions of all kinds, from mere ignorance to 'bad faith.'" Evaluate this claim, supporting your answer with examples and reasons.
3. The authors contend that in order to act with critical thinking and moral courage, people must be taught to confront authority. Explain how you think people could be taught and encouraged to confront authority in a constructive way.
4. "Even in extreme situations, we have a choice, whether we choose to exercise it or not. The belief that our role, our desires, our past, or the actions of others preclude our acting morally is a convenient but illusory way of distancing ourselves from the evil that surrounds us." Evaluate this claim and give examples and reasons to support your view. ◀

# **WORKING IN GROUPS**

# **I**ntroduction to Small Group Communication

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## **Inescapable Groups**

### **Defining Small Group Communication**

Three or More People

Interaction

Common Goal

Interdependence

Working

## **Synergistic System**

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Working in Groups**

Advantages

Disadvantages

## **Types of Groups**

Primary Groups

Social Groups

Self-Help Groups

Learning Groups

Service Groups

Work Groups

Public Groups

## **How to Learn about Groups**

Theories, Methods, and Tools

Experiential Learning

## **Balance: The Guiding Principle**



## *Inescapable Groups*

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You can run but you can't hide from groups. Nor should you. As a member of many groups—families, friends, teams, colleagues, businesses, institutions, and communities—you cannot escape the need to work in groups. Former Green Bay Packers coach, Vince Lombardi, put it this way: "Individual commitment to a group effort: this is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, and a civilization work."<sup>1</sup> Whereas individual achievement was once the hallmark of personal success, we now live in an era in which success depends on our ability to work together.

From aboriginal clans to high-tech research teams, we move through life surrounded by and immersed in groups. When asked to describe who we are, most of us include information about the groups to which we belong. The members of an exclusive country club, a rural church, a corporate board, and Alcoholics Anonymous belong to groups in order to meet their individual and collective needs.

Not only can't you escape the influence of groups, you may be surprised by the long list of groups to which you belong. College students typically list family, friends, study groups, class project groups, car pools, roommates, volunteer groups, sports teams, staff at work, campus clubs, religious groups, and neighborhood groups. After graduation, you may add service clubs, management teams, governing boards, political committees, and professional association memberships.

Groups are fast becoming the U.S. way of doing business.

- Studies of managers show that they spend 30 percent to 80 percent of their time in meetings.<sup>2</sup>
- As many as 11 million meetings occur daily in the United States.<sup>3</sup>
- An insurance company found that the average executive spends . . . almost two out of every five working days in small group meetings.<sup>4</sup>
- By the year 2000, 40–50 percent of the U.S. workforce will use work teams to manage businesses, produce products, and provide services.<sup>5</sup>

Katzenbach and Smith observe that "most models of the organization of the future that we have heard about . . . are premised on teams surpassing individuals as the primary performance unit in the company."<sup>6</sup> This observation does not mean that individual performance will become unimportant. Rather, the challenge will be to balance the roles of individuals and teams.

## *Defining Small Group Communication*

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When does a collection of people become a group? Do people talking in an elevator or discussing the weather at an airport constitute a group? Should

the members of a church congregation listening to a sermon or the fans cheering at a baseball game be considered a group? Although the people in these examples may look like a group, they are not working in, for, or with other members. Working in groups requires sustained and purposeful small group communication.

We define **small group communication** as the interaction of three or more interdependent people working toward a common goal. In order to better understand this definition, it is necessary to understand its essential terms.

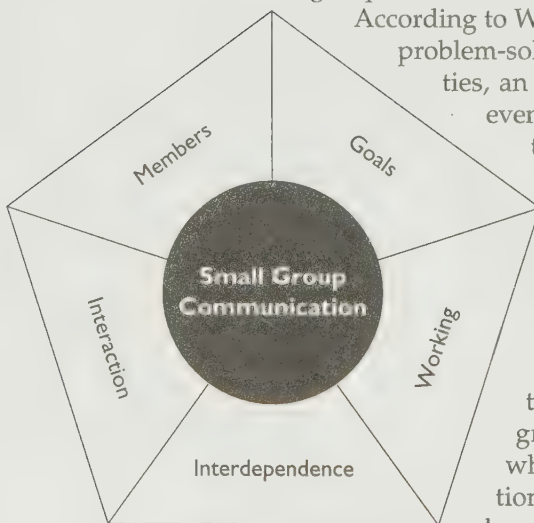
### *Three or More People*

A small group consists of at least three people. The phrase “two’s company, three’s a crowd” recognizes that a conversation between two people is quite different from a three-person discussion. When two people interact in a conversation, the interaction is limited to two possibilities: Eve communicates with Adam; Adam communicates with Eve. When a third person is added the dynamics of the situation change. A third person can change a tie vote into a two-to-one decision. A third person can be the listener who judges and influences the content and style of the conversation: All of us have had the experience of walking up to two people who immediately change the subject because we have joined them.

Although three is the minimum number of people needed for small group communication, a maximum size is more difficult to recommend.

According to Wood, Phillips, and Pedersen, the ideal group size for a problem-solving discussion is five to seven members.<sup>7</sup> To avoid ties, an odd number of members seems to be better than an even number. Groups having more than seven members tend to divide into subgroups. Also, as groups grow larger, individual satisfaction and commitment to the group often decreases.<sup>8</sup> Members simply begin to feel left out or inconsequential. Yet, groups with fewer than five members often lack the resources and diversity of opinion needed for effective problem solving.

Obviously, many groups consisting of more than seven members are formed. Yet, even in large groups, there is usually a core of five to seven members who do more of the work and take on leadership functions. Beyond fifteen members, coordination and control become difficult. Members may not know one another or be able to communicate directly with other members, and discussion often requires elaborate rules and procedures in order to organize group tasks and control the flow of communication.



**FIGURE 1.1**  
Components of Small  
Group Communication

## *Interaction*

**Interaction** requires communication among group members who use verbal and nonverbal messages to generate meanings and establish relationships within a group context.<sup>9</sup> Communication is the medium through which groupwork is done. Communication allows members to share information and opinions, make decisions and solve problems, and develop interpersonal relationships. The way in which group members communicate does more than reveal group dynamics, it creates them.<sup>10</sup> Ellis and Fisher maintain that, in a group, “a communicative relationship develops during the process of interacting with others.”<sup>11</sup> Group members learn which behaviors are appropriate and inappropriate, and which communication rules govern the interaction among members. Regardless of whether group members are meeting face-to-face or in cyberspace, small group communication requires interaction.

## *Common Goal*

Group members come together for a reason. It is this collective reason or goal that defines and unifies a group. A **goal** is the purpose or objective toward which a group is directed. The label doesn’t matter—goal, objective, purpose, mission, assignment, or vision statement. Without a common goal, groups would wonder: Why are we meeting? Why should we care or work hard? Where are we going?

Often a group’s goal is assigned. For example, a marketing instructor may assign a semester-long project to a group of students in order to demonstrate their ability to develop a marketing campaign. A chemical company may assemble a group of employees from various departments and ask them to make recommendations for more efficient and safe storage of hazardous chemicals.

Other groups may have the freedom to choose their own goal. A gathering of neighbors may meet to discuss ways to prevent crime in their immediate neighborhood. A group of nursing students may form a study group to review course materials for an anatomy exam. Whatever the goal, effective groups understand their common goal and dedicate their efforts to the work needed to accomplish that goal.

The importance of a group’s goal cannot be underestimated. If there is one single factor that separates successful from unsuccessful groups, it is having a clear goal. A study by Larson and LaFasto concluded that “in every case, without exception, where an effectively functioning team was identified, it was described . . . as having a clear understanding of its objective.”<sup>12</sup> The most effective groups, writes Billington, “invest tremendous time and effort in exploring, shaping, and agreeing on a purpose. . . .”<sup>13</sup>

## *Interdependence*

**Interdependence** means that each group member is affected and influenced by the actions of other members. An interdependent group functions as a team in which all members take responsibility for doing their part. The failure



of a single group member can adversely affect the entire group. For example, if one student in a study group fails to read an assigned chapter, the entire group will be unprepared for questions related to the subject matter covered in that chapter.

When small groups interact in order to achieve a common goal, members exert influence on one another. Whether we like it or not, there are not many tasks that can be accomplished without information, advice, support, and assistance from other people.

**Working** This textbook places special emphasis on groups that work together in pursuit of a common goal. Working in groups, however, is not the same as groups at work. Certainly, many of the groups that you have worked with have been at your job; however, groups that are unrelated to your job also engage in work. A church committee discussing construction plans for a new youth center is engaged in work. A family sitting around the kitchen table trying to come up with a way to divide household chores is working hard to find an equitable solution. However, friends meeting for dinner are not working. Although a group of friends may be interacting with the goal of meeting their social needs, they do not need a plan of work in order to accomplish that goal. Being with friends is not the same as working with friends.

## Synergistic System

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When three or more interdependent people interact and work toward a common goal, they have the potential to be synergistic. **Synergy** is a term that describes the cooperative interaction of several factors that results in a combined effect greater than the total of all individual contributions. In other words, the whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts. The term *synergy* comes from the Greek word *sunergos*, meaning “working together.” Synergy does not occur when people work alone; it occurs only when people work together.

Small group communication, as we have defined it, is more than a collection of individuals who talk to each other. A group is a complex system. Ellis and Fisher define a system as “a set of component parts that have relationships and are interdependent.”<sup>14</sup> In such a system, the actions of individual members in the form of talk or behavior affect everyone in the group as well as the outcome of the group’s work. The analogy of a recipe illustrates this effect. Eggs, sugar, cream, and bourbon have very different and individ-



ual tastes, but when combined properly in a recipe, the result is an irresistible and potentially intoxicating eggnog. In groups, people are the major ingredients; in the right combination, they can create a highly productive and satisfying experience.

Effective groups are synergistic. Baseball teams without superstars have won the World Series. Companies whose executives earn modest salaries have surpassed those companies in which the CEOs are paid millions of dollars. Ordinary groups have achieved extraordinary results. Synergy represents the positive energy that transforms group members into a motivated, energetic, and highly productive team. Synergy occurs when the knowledge, talents, and dedication of group members merge into a force that surpasses anything group members could have produced without cooperative interaction.

## Advantages and Disadvantages of Working in Groups

If you are like most people, you have had to sit through long and boring meetings run by incompetent leaders. Perhaps you have lost patience with a group that couldn't accomplish a simple task you could do all by yourself. One study found that one-third of business meeting participants feel as though they have little or no influence on the outcome of group decisions.<sup>15</sup> Other studies suggest that as much as a third of the time we spend in meetings is wasted with unproductive business.<sup>16</sup> In the long run, however, the advantages of working in effective groups outweigh the potential disadvantages.

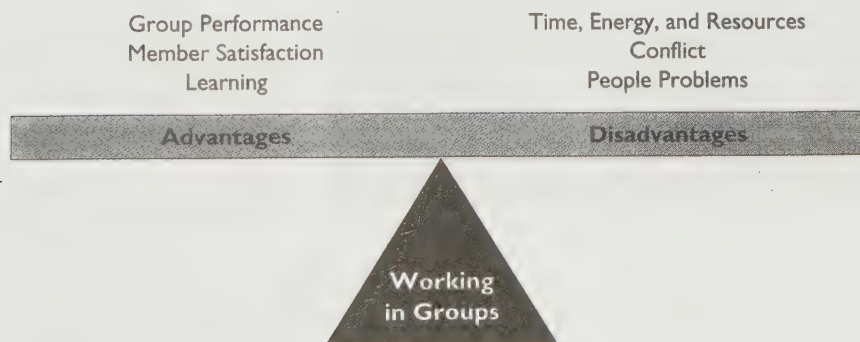


FIGURE 1.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Working in Groups

## Advantages

Although participating in groups can be time-consuming and even aggravating, the advantages are significant. Three of these advantages are that, in many situations, groups perform better than individuals working alone; members find the experience rewarding; and participants can learn more.

**Group Performance.** Groups make important decisions and solve many problems. They decide how businesses compete, how staff members work, how governments rule, how instructors teach, and how doctors attend to patients' needs. Poole describes how the "daily media report hundreds of decisions emanating from civic bodies, juries, boards of directors, government panels, church groups, clubs, labor caucuses, school boards, task forces, and the like."<sup>17</sup> The reason so many groups are doing so much that affects our daily lives is fairly simple: Groups can perform better and accomplish more

than individuals working alone. Katzenbach and Smith have noted that groups "outperform individuals acting alone especially when performance requires multiple skills, judgments, and experiences."<sup>18</sup> Senge and his colleagues claim that "if you want something really creative done, you ask a team to do it—instead of sending one person off to do it on his or her own."<sup>19</sup>

Despite such impressive claims about group performance, there are exceptions. If the task is fairly simple and routine (write a memo, mail a letter, total the receipts), it may be easier for individuals working alone to accomplish the task. If one person knows the answer to a question or if the task requires a specialized expert, then a single person may be better equipped to get the job done. When, however, the task is complex and the answers are unclear, a group will perform better. McClernon explains that groups have more successful outcomes because complex decisions require more perspectives and expertise than any one person might have.<sup>20</sup> Groups may not perform better in all situations, but when the right members are matched to an appropriate task, little can compare to the good work and success of an effective group.



A very large group will often form smaller groups. What are the advantages of working in smaller groups rather than very large groups? (McLaughlin/The Image Works)

**Member Satisfaction.** Even if groups didn't accomplish more than individuals working alone, many people would still work in groups. The social benefits can be just as important as task achievement. People belong to and work in groups because they make friends, have an opportunity to socialize, and can feel part of a unified and successful team. After reviewing the litera-

ture on group member satisfaction, Pavitt and Curtis conclude that “the greater the opportunity that people have to communicate in groups, the more satisfactory the group experience will be for them.”<sup>21</sup> When members become good friends and valued colleagues, they look forward to working in groups. In studying the use of groups and teams in U.S. businesses, Manz and Sims conclude that team “members are generally more satisfied and experience an enhanced quality of life at work. For the most part, people like teams.”<sup>22</sup>

**Learning.** An added advantage of working in groups is the amount of learning that occurs within an effective group. Groups can enhance learning by sharing collective information, stimulating critical thinking, challenging assumptions, and even raising standards of achievement. Collaborative learning is receiving high marks and praise in public schools and in higher education. A *New York Times* article summarized the results of a Harvard University study on college learning. The report concluded that college students thrive “when they do at least some of their studying in small groups rather than logging long, solitary hours of study. . . .”<sup>23</sup> A review of 168 studies of college students comparing cooperative, group-based learning with traditional means indicated that collaborative learning promotes higher individual achievement in knowledge acquisition, retention, accuracy, creativity in problem solving, and higher-level reasoning.<sup>24</sup>

Senge and colleagues claim that, in the corporate world, “great teams are learning organizations—groups of people who, over time, enhance their capacity to create what they truly deserve to create.”<sup>25</sup> Working in groups promotes learning because the process helps members put theories and facts into perspective while stimulating interest, clarifying ideas, and teaching individuals to cooperate.

Working in groups also gives us the opportunity to learn from and with other members. New members learn from veterans; amateurs learn from experts. Not only do group members learn more about the topics they discuss, they also learn more about how to work as a team.

## Disadvantages

The advantages of working in groups most often occur when groups are working efficiently and effectively. The disadvantages are more likely to occur when a group is not the appropriate way to achieve a goal; when members do not meet their potential; or when problems interfere with group members’ willingness and ability to communicate. The most common complaints about working in groups concern the amount of time, energy, and resources expended by groups and the conflict and people problems that can arise.

**Time, Energy, and Resources.** Working in groups costs time, energy, and resources. Does an organization get its money’s worth when executives spend two out of every five working days in meetings? The 11 million daily meetings that are held in the United States cost a lot of time and money. One survey found unproductive meeting time to be a \$37 billion annual waste.<sup>26</sup>



The 3M corporation has tried to take into account the many factors that affect the cost of meetings, including the hourly wages of group members, the wages of those who help prepare for meetings, the cost of materials used in the meeting, and overhead costs. The conclusion was that meetings cost the 3M corporation a staggering \$78.8 million annually.<sup>27</sup> We spend a lot of time in groups; if that time is wasted, we are throwing away valuable resources and effort.

**Conflict.** Very few people enjoy or seek out conflict. Bennis, Parikh, and Lessem explain that “fear of conflict is often prevalent in the work-place because conflict is taken to spell trouble.”<sup>28</sup> When group members work together to achieve a goal, there is always the potential for disagreement. Unfortunately, those who disagree are often seen as aggressive and disruptive. As a result, some people will do almost anything to avoid conflict and confrontation. They may even avoid working in groups. Although most researchers and writers argue that “in a good discussion, arguing our different viewpoints might lead to clarifying and reconciling them,”<sup>29</sup> group members often are wary of situations in which they may have to argue with others or defend their opinions. Ironically, one study found that nearly 30 percent of all meetings in corporate America are held to resolve a conflict.<sup>30</sup> Yet, because of apprehension about conflict, some people avoid meetings in which controversial issues are scheduled for discussion, or remain unwilling to express their opinions.

**People Problems.** As much as we may want our colleagues to share our interests, viewpoints, and willingness to work, there is always the potential that individual group members will create problems. Like anyone else in our daily lives, group members can be stubborn, lazy, and even cruel. When deciding whether to work in a group, we often consider whether we want to spend time working with certain members.

Members who are not confident or well-prepared may have little to contribute. In order to avoid conflict or extra work, some members may go along with the group rather than search for the best solution to a problem. Strong, domineering members can put so much pressure on others that dissent is stifled. Although no one wants to work with a group of unpleasant members, there may be circumstances in which people problems cannot be avoided. When this situation occurs, the disadvantages of group work can overwhelm the advantages.

## *Types of Groups*

All groups are not alike. Groups, like their individual members, have many different characteristics and concerns. We have sorted them into seven categories: primary groups, social groups, self-help groups, learning groups, ser-



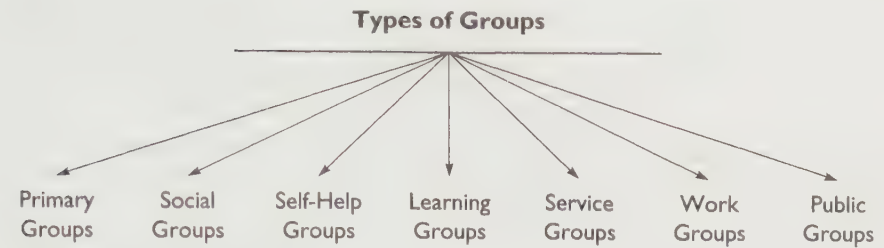


FIGURE 1.3 Types of Groups

vice groups, work groups, and public groups. These categories range from the most personal and informal types of groups to more formal types. Each type of group can be recognized by observing its setting (where and when the group meets) and its membership (who is in the group).

### *Primary Groups*

**Primary groups** are composed of family members and friends who provide us affection, support, and a sense of belonging. Primary groups make us who we are. When families or close friends do not provide appropriate or sufficient support, the psychological scars can last a lifetime. When primary groups help us gain confidence, we are better prepared for all the other types of groups we encounter.

### *Social Groups*

**Social groups** share common interests in a friendly setting or participate in a common activity. These groups are formed by people who enjoy interacting with others while pursuing recreational or social goals. Examples of social groups include college sororities and fraternities, athletic teams, and hobby groups (for example, stamp collecting, gardening, classic cars, or bird watching).

### *Self-Help Groups*

**Self-help groups** offer support and encouragement to members who want or need support with personal problems. They are also referred to as support groups, therapy groups, personal growth groups, and encounter groups. People join self-help groups to meet and share their personal concerns with other people who are dealing with the same problems. According to Wuthnow, 40 percent of the adult population in the United States belongs to support groups.<sup>31</sup> In addition to private therapy groups, self-help groups include specialized organizations such as Parents Without Partners, Weight Watchers, and Alcoholics Anonymous.

### *Learning Groups*

By sharing knowledge and experiences, **learning groups** help members acquire information and develop skills. In some cases, learning groups are designed to benefit individual members ("I want to improve my grade on the next exam.") or the group as a whole ("We need to learn how to use our e-mail system more effectively."). Learning groups can range from a postgraduate seminar at a university to a parenting class at the local hospital. Other examples include book discussion groups, religious study groups, class project groups, health and fitness classes, and professional workshops.

### *Service Groups*

Like members of social groups, service group members may join in order to socialize with others. In addition, **service groups** are dedicated to worthy causes that help other people both within and outside the group. Many communities rely on service groups to fill the gap between self-help and government support. There are numerous examples of service groups including the Kiwanis, labor unions, business and professional women's clubs, neighborhood associations, PTAs, the American Legion, the NAACP, and fire and police auxiliary groups.

### *Work Groups*

If you are employed, you probably belong to several work groups. You may be a member of a production team or a work crew. You may be part of a sales staff, service department, management group, or research team. In almost every case, the **work groups** you belong to are responsible for achieving specific tasks or routine duties on behalf of a company, organization, association, agency, or institution. Goodall contends that over the last twenty years, American businesses have shifted to become more group-centered; work groups have assumed responsibility for making decisions and carrying out tasks in organizations.<sup>32</sup> Among the many types of work groups, two deserve special attention: committees and teams.

**Committees.** Committees form when a group is given a specific assignment by a larger group or by a person in a position of authority. Although committees are most common in the work environment, they are often used when service groups have a specific task to accomplish. Committees can take several forms. An **ad hoc committee** is formed for a very specific purpose and disbands once it has completed that assignment or task. For example, an ad hoc committee could plan a ground-breaking ceremony or high school reunion, organize a company's fund-raising campaign for a charity, or promote a community cleanup for a neighborhood.

**Standing committees** remain active in order to accomplish an ongoing task. Many businesses and organizations have ongoing social committees, membership committees, program committees, and finance committees. A **task force** is a type of committee appointed to gather information and make recommendations regarding a specific issue or problem. A corporation's mar-

keting task force could recommend a package of promotional activities. A government task force could examine the health care system or the reasons why a school system's test scores have declined.

**Teams.** Work **teams** are groups given full responsibility and resources for their performance. Unlike committees, work teams are relatively permanent groups. They do not take time *from* work to meet—they unite *to* work. A health care team attends to a specific patient or group of patients. A research team is assigned a specific research project. A legal team may defend or prosecute a specific case.

The latest innovation in work groups is the self-management team. In their book *The Wisdom of Teams*, Katzenbach and Smith define a **self-management team** as “a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, performance goals, and an approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.”<sup>33</sup> In a self-management team, peer-led groups are formed and given complete responsibility for seeing that a task is completed. Dumaine reports that “in growing numbers of companies, self-management teams are taking over such standard supervisory duties as scheduling work, maintaining quality, even administering pay and vacations.”<sup>34</sup> Many managers claim that teams produce higher productivity, lower labor costs, and more committed employees.<sup>35</sup> The following examples document the efficiency and effectiveness of self-management teams:

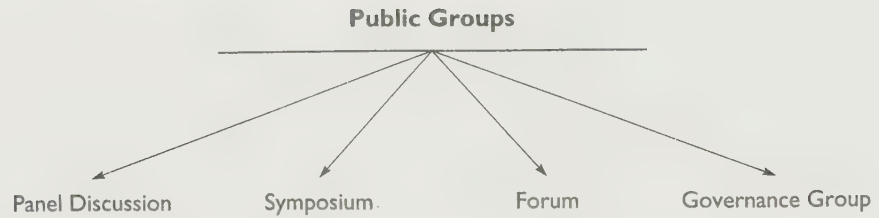
- At a Johnson Wax plant, a self-management team figured out how to make an operation more efficient. As a result, productivity increased 30 percent while the number of middle managers decreased.<sup>36</sup>
- At a weekly meeting, a team of Federal Express clerks spotted—and eventually solved—a billing problem that was costing the company \$2.1 million a year.<sup>37</sup>
- A General Motors automobile-battery plant organized around teams reported productivity savings of 30 to 40 percent when compared with traditionally organized plants.<sup>38</sup>

Undoubtedly, there will be more attempts to use teams to enhance productivity and improve employee morale and product quality in all sorts of work settings.

## *Public Groups*

Primary, social, self-help, learning, service, and work groups usually function in private. Although a group and its product may be visible to the public, members often prefer to meet, discuss, and make decisions in private.

There is, however, one type of group that is seen and heard by non-group members. **Public groups** engage in discussion in front of or for the benefit of the public. Their meetings usually occur in public settings where they are



**FIGURE 1.4** Types of Public Groups

judged by an audience of listeners. Although public groups may engage in information sharing, decision making, or problem solving, they are also concerned with the impression they make on a public audience. Four different categories of public groups illustrate how these groups function.

**Panel Discussion.** A **panel discussion** involves several people who interact with one another about a common topic for the benefit of an audience. Panel discussions are very common on television talk shows as varied as Oprah Winfrey and Ricki Lake. These programs have presented bizarre and controversial panel discussions, while more somber discussions have been moderated on Sunday morning political discussion shows and on business programs such as *Wall Street Week*. Regardless of whether a panel discussion is live or on television, there is usually a moderator who tries to control the flow of communication. Whatever the format, panel discussions are designed to educate, influence, or entertain an audience.

**Symposium.** In a **symposium**, group members present short, uninterrupted speeches on different aspects of a topic for the benefit of the public. For example, a local PTA may sponsor a drug symposium in which a physician, psychologist, police officer, and former drug addict are given uninterrupted time to inform parents about the extent of the drug problem and to recommend strategies for prevention and treatment. At election time, the League of Women Voters or a group of politicians may organize a candidates' symposium at which each candidate is given five minutes to explain why he or she should be elected to public office. What makes a symposium unique is that group members give speeches to a public audience rather than interact with other group members.

**Forum.** Very often a panel or symposium is followed by a **forum**, which provides an opportunity for audience members to comment or ask questions. In some cases, a forum is an open discussion in which members of the public share their concerns about a specific issue with one another. In other cases, a forum is an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of and ex-



press concerns to elected officials and experts. A strong moderator is needed in a forum to make sure that audience members have an equal opportunity to speak.

**Governance Group.** Public policy decisions are made in public by **governance groups**. State legislatures, city and county councils, and the governing boards of public agencies and educational institutions must conduct their meetings in public. The U.S. Congress cannot deny the public access to congressional debate. Unfortunately, most government watchers know that “real” decisions are often made in private and that the public debate is just for show. At the same time, though, an elected or appointed official’s vote is not a secret. Governance group members know that if their votes are different from their public positions, they may be accused of pandering to voters.

The seven types of groups are not absolute categories. Many forms of groups overlap. A Girl Scout belongs to a social and learning group, whereas the adults who run a troop or form the national association would be classified as members of a service and a work group. Understanding the ways in which the types or forms of groups differ can help members work more efficiently and effectively.

## How to Learn about Groups

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Most of us would laugh if someone were trying to become a pilot or a chef just by reading a book. Likewise, no textbook or classroom lecture alone can teach us to become more effective group members. The way to study groups is to balance an understanding of theories, methods, and tools with practical experience.

### *Theories, Methods, and Tools*

Theories, methods, and tools are inseparable components in the learning process. Peter Senge and his colleagues claim that the “synergy between theories, methods, and tools lies at the heart of any human endeavor that truly builds knowledge.”<sup>39</sup> The interaction of theories, methods, and tools also lies at the heart of learning how to work in groups. To illustrate such synergy, Senge and his colleagues provide the following example:

In medicine, the theory of cardiac functioning—how a healthy heart functions and the irregularities that indicate a heart attack—has led to a long-standing methodology for cardiac monitoring to track heart attacks in progress and to avert those that are starting. The method advanced significantly when electronic cardiac monitors were developed—a tool which enabled much more precise and extensive monitoring.<sup>40</sup>



THIS city council meeting is an example of a governance group. In what other situations do groups conduct their work publicly? (Nubar Alexanian/Stock Boston)

nam, Seibold, and Schutz. Learning about such theories, however, will not make you a more effective group member. Theories do not necessarily tell you what to do, or what is right or wrong. Moreover, many of the accepted theories of yesteryear have been disproved or have gone out of style. Yet, without theories, we would have difficulty understanding why or how a particular method or procedure affects group performance.

**Methods.** The word *method* comes from the Greek *methodos*—the means to pursue particular objectives.<sup>42</sup> **Methods** are strategies, guidelines, procedures, and techniques for dealing with the issues and problems that arise in groups. Throughout this textbook, you will read about individual and group methods—from leadership strategies to participation guidelines, from conflict-management techniques to decision-making procedures.

Learning about methods, however, is not enough. Effective methods are based on theories. Without theory, you won't know why a particular method works in one situation and fails in another. Methods based on theory provide a way to understand when, where, why, and how to use methods effectively.

**Tools.** Tools are devices used to perform work. Unlike handheld devices such as saws or hammers, the **tools** needed by groups are resources, rules, and skills that help carry out or achieve a group's common goal. Throughout this textbook, you will read about how to use researched information, assessment instruments, agendas, minutes, parliamentary procedure, and even technology-based tools. You also will learn about the ways in which commu-

**Theories.** Theories are statements that explain how the world works. They try to explain or predict events and behavior. Karl Popper described theories as "nets to catch what we call 'the world': to rationalize, to explain, and to master it."<sup>41</sup> Small group communication theories have emerged from extensive observation and research. They help us understand what is occurring in a group and why a group succeeds or fails.

Throughout this textbook you will read about theories associated with names such as Bales, Bormann, Dewey, Donnellon, Fiedler, Fisher, Frey, Gouran, Hirokawa, Janis, Lewin, Maslow, Myers/Briggs, Poole, Put-

nication skills function as the most important tools available to all group members. Hirokawa and Poole describe communication as the “primary tool of social action” that has a significant influence on decision making. “Like all tools, communication can shape both the user and the forces applied” to the group and its members.<sup>43</sup>

Like methods, tools are most effective when their use is based on theory. Although a master carpenter can tell you what tool to use, you may have no idea how to use it or why it works. Senge and his coauthors maintain that without an underlying theory, we may not “appreciate the limitations of a tool, or even its counterproductiveness, if used inappropriately.”<sup>44</sup> In our eagerness to solve problems or achieve a group’s goal, we may grab ready-made, easy-to-use tools that do not address the causes of a problem or help us achieve the group’s goal. Using tools without an understanding of methods and theories can make the process of working in groups inefficient, ineffective, and frustrating for all members.

In addition to the tools themselves, TOOLBOXES appear in every chapter.

#### TOOLBOX 1.1 Using Toolboxes

TOOLBOXES contain cross-references to the theories, methods, and tools you will find in other chapters. Learning how to work in groups is not a step-by-step process. Although the chapters in this textbook follow a logical sequence, you can go anywhere in the book to supplement your understanding and further develop your skills. If, for example, you want to learn how to construct a meeting agenda, you can turn to Chapter 14. If you have to plan and conduct a meeting, read Chapter 13. If you are nervous about speaking out in an important meeting, review the guidelines on communication apprehension in Chapter 5. If you want to understand the roles and responsibilities of group leadership, consult Chapter 3. TOOLBOXES are designed to remind you that theories, methods, and tools do not stand alone.

### *Experiential Learning*

An understanding of theories, methods, and tools is necessary in learning how to achieve group goals. There is nothing, though, that can surpass the hands-on experiences that help members learn the complex skills needed to work effectively in groups.

Fortunately, you already have extensive experience working in groups. These experiences provide you with events and behavior to consider and analyze. Yet, experience alone may not improve your effectiveness in groups. Experiences can teach as many bad habits as good ones, and they can be misinterpreted. Participating in a disastrous discussion may not help you learn



how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of a group; instead, it may convince you to avoid working in groups at all costs.

Productive change in the behavior of group discussants depends on several experiential learning assumptions:

- You learn more from active participation in structured group experiences.
- You progress more rapidly by dealing with realistic problems.
- You improve performance when you can practice new skills without threat or evaluation.
- You better understand small group communication theories when they are applied to real-world experiences.<sup>45</sup>

When reading this textbook, we recommend that you add a simple, one-word question to the end of every concept you read about. That question is “So?” In other words, what is the significance of this idea or example? How does it apply to your experiences in groups? How can it affect and change the way you behave in groups? A theory may be interesting but of little benefit if you cannot apply it. Methods and tools may be clear but of little use if you don’t try to use them.

Just reading this book will not necessarily make you a better and more effective group member. Participating in group discussions will. Like many skills, effective group participation requires both knowledge and practice. You *can* learn to become a more effective group member. All you need is a willingness to study and work in groups, along with the courage to challenge assumptions and try new strategies.

## Balance: The Guiding Principle

This textbook includes small group communication theories, methods, and tools designed to help you and your group become more efficient and effective. At the heart of this book is a guiding principle that gives real-world significance to your experiences in and study of small group communication. We believe that an ideal group succeeds because it has achieved *balance*.

The concept of balance is a way of relating small group theories, methods, and tools to a group’s goal and its members’ needs. A clear goal is the point or supporting fulcrum on which a group must balance many factors. A group that reaches a decision or completes an assigned task is not in balance if every person in the group ends up hating everyone else. Also, a group that relies on one or two members to do all the work is not in balance. Effective groups balance task and social functions, individual and group needs, leadership and participation, conflict and cooperation, speaking and listening.



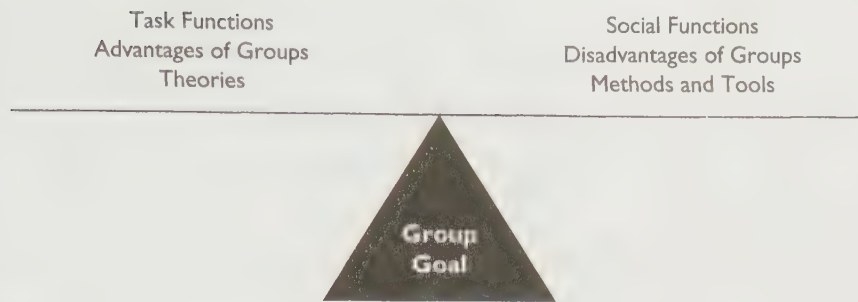


FIGURE 1.5 The Principle of Balance

The key to balancing the complex and even competing elements in a group discussion is a commitment to communicating effectively and working cooperatively toward the group's goal.

## Summary Study Guide

- Working in groups is an inescapable part of life; most people spend a considerable amount of time and energy working in groups.
- Small group communication is the interaction of three or more interdependent people working toward a common goal.
- The ideal size of a small group is five to seven members.
- Group interaction requires communication among group members who use verbal and nonverbal messages to generate meanings and establish relationships within a group context.
- Communication is the medium through which group goals are accomplished.
- The most significant single factor that separates successful groups from unsuccessful ones is having a clear understanding of the group's common goal.
- Effective groups are synergistic; they combine the best qualities and talents of all members into something that surpasses anything group members could have produced without cooperative interaction.
- Three advantages of working in groups include improved performance, member satisfaction, and more learning.
- The disadvantages of working in groups include the amount of time, energy, and resources expended by groups and the interpersonal conflict and people problems that arise.
- The different types of groups can be sorted into seven group categories: primary, social, self-help, learning, service, work, and public.

- Work groups include committees and teams. Corporations have given special attention to self-management teams.
- Public groups communicate to and for the benefit of an audience. Four types of public groups are panel discussions, symposia, forums, and governance groups.
- Understanding and applying theories, methods, and tools are inseparable components in learning about the small group communication process.
- Successful groups are able to achieve balance as they confront a variety of challenges.

## Groupwork *Learning about Groups in Groups*

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**GOAL** To establish study groups for the course.  
To become acquainted with group members.

**PARTICIPANTS** Groups of 5–7 members.

### **PROCEDURE**

1. Students should arrange themselves in study groups, making sure that each group has neither too many nor too few members.
2. All members should briefly introduce themselves.
3. Group members should then address the “Study Group Issues” listed below. The group will have approximately 30 minutes to complete the discussion.
4. These groups should constitute study groups for the course. As Chapter 1 points out, individuals who study in groups tend to learn better. Groups should be encouraged to meet regularly for the remainder of the course.

### *Study Group Issues*

- What is the goal of our group?
  - How can each member best contribute to the group’s goal?
  - What are some frustrating experiences each member has had in other groups?
  - How can the group avoid these problems?
  - When and how often should we meet?
  - Where should the group meet?
  - How will group members contact each other outside of class?
-

## Basic Group Elements

*Directions* Small group communication includes five basic elements: (1) group size, (2) interaction, (3) common goal, (4) interdependence, and (5) working. Think about the groups you belong to or a group that has just formed in your class or at work. Answer the following questions to assess the extent to which your group contains the basic group elements. If you can answer yes to most of the questions, your group is likely to succeed.

### ELEMENTS OF SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION

Group Size	Yes	No	Sometimes
1. Do group members communicate with each other directly?			
2. Does the group have enough people to achieve its goal?			
3. Can the group function effectively without forming subgroups?			
<b>Interaction</b>			
1. Can group members communicate with each other easily and frequently?			
2. Do members receive and respond to messages in a way that enhances communication?			
<b>Common Goal</b>			
1. Does the group have a clear goal?			
2. Do members understand and support the group goal?			
<b>Interdependence</b>			
1. Do members feel responsible for the group's actions?			
2. Do members understand their individual and group responsibilities?			
3. Do members believe "we're all in this together"?			
<b>Working</b>			
1. Are members ready, willing, and able to participate as active group members?			
2. Do members give the time and energy needed to achieve the group's goal?			

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# **L***eadership in Groups*

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## **What Is Leadership?**

### **Leadership and Power**

Reward Power

Coercive Power

Legitimate Power

Expert Power

Referent Power

### **Becoming a Leader**

Designated Leaders

Emergent Leaders

Strategies for Becoming a Leader

### **Leadership Theories**

Trait Theory

Styles Theory

Situational Theory

Functional Theory

### **Gender and Leadership**

### **Balanced Leadership**

# What Is Leadership?

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All groups need leadership. Without leadership, a group may be nothing more than a collection of individuals lacking the coordination and motivation to achieve a common goal. Cathcart and Samovar maintain, "There are no successful groups without leaders. . . . Leaders lead because groups demand it and rely on leaders to satisfy needs."<sup>1</sup>

In his book *Certain Trumpets: The Call of Leaders*, Garry Wills offers a definition of leadership that describes what a leader does: "The leader is one who mobilizes others toward a goal shared by leader and followers. . . . Leaders, followers, and goals make up the three equally necessary supports for leadership."<sup>2</sup> Without willing followers and shared goals, you may possess the title of leader but still accomplish nothing.

The Wills definition, however, does not acknowledge that an effective leader needs decision-making and communication skills in order to influence and motivate group members toward achieving a goal shared by leader and followers. **Leadership**, then, can be defined as the ability to make strategic decisions and use communication to mobilize group members toward achieving a shared goal.

A leader and leadership are not the same. Leader is the title given to a person; leadership refers to the action that a leader takes to help group members achieve shared goals. Some groups have no official leader but instead have one or more members who engage in leadership behaviors. Other groups may have designated leaders who fail to behave in ways typically associated with leadership.

Lee is the manager of our department, so he's technically our leader. Lee always follows procedures and meets deadlines for paperwork, so I guess he's a good manager. But, we don't get much guidance or motivation from

## TOOLBOX 3.1 Chairing a Meeting

The person who chairs a meeting may not be the same person who serves as a group's leader. Although a leader often calls and conducts meetings, that responsibility may also be delegated to someone other than the leader, particularly when a group breaks into subcommittees or when a leader wants to be a more active participant in a group's deliberations. Maintaining order during a meeting and facilitating a productive discussion are the primary responsibilities of the chairperson. **Chapter 13: Planning and Conducting Meetings** describes the methods and tools available to group members who have the responsibility of planning and chairing a meeting.

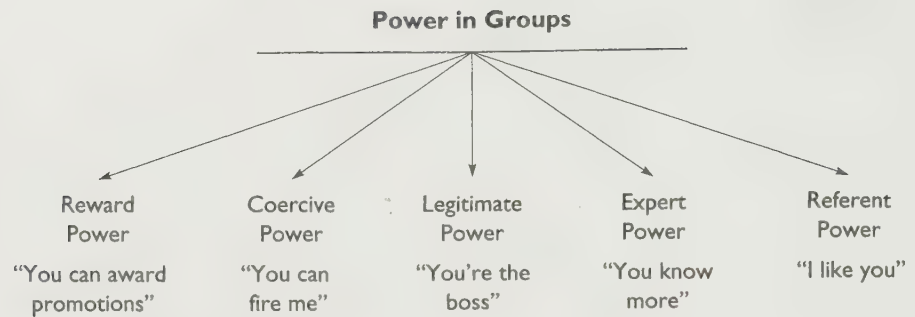


FIGURE 3.1 Power in Groups

him. I just think managing tasks and real leadership of people are somehow different. Allison supervises the other department. She seems to inspire her workers. They're more innovative and work closely with each other. We do our job, but they seem to be on a mission. I've always thought that working for Allison would be more fulfilling.

Becoming an effective group leader requires an understanding of leadership theories, methods, and tools.

## Leadership and Power

It is impossible to understand effective leadership and the skills of an effective leader without understanding the importance of power. As Jesuino has written, "The capacity of a leader to influence [group members] is another way of saying that the leader has power over the followers."<sup>3</sup> In the hands of a just and wise leader, power is a positive force; in the hands of an unjust and foolish leader, power can be destructive. Bennis and Nanus contend that power is "the quality without which leaders cannot lead."<sup>4</sup>

**Power** is the ability or authority to influence and motivate others. One of the traditional ways to analyze power in a group discussion is found in the categories of power developed by French and Raven.<sup>5</sup> They divide power into five categories: reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, and referent power.

**Reward Power** **Reward power** derives from the leader's authority to give group members something they value. Whether the reward is a cash bonus, a promotion, or a convenient work schedule, its effectiveness depends on whether group members value the reward. Some leaders may think they have power because they



control group rewards, only to discover that those rewards have little value for members. Employees may not want a promotion if the new job is less appealing than their current job. Only when the reward is worthwhile will group members respond to a leader who uses this kind of power.

### *Coercive Power*

If the carrot approach doesn't work, a leader may resort to using a stick: **coercive power**. Another way to describe coercive power is to call it punishment power. When leaders can discipline, demote, or dismiss group members, they have coercive power. Hackman and Johnson contend that "coercion is most effective when those subject to this form of power are aware of expectations and are warned in advance about the penalties for failure to comply. . . . Leaders using coercive power must consistently carry out threatened punishments."<sup>6</sup> In emergency situations, coercive power may be the only way to rescue a project or safeguard a group. However, coercive power can be counterproductive. A skillful leader uses coercive power sparingly and only when all other means of influence have failed to mobilize group members toward achieving their shared goal.

### *Legitimate Power*

**Legitimate power** resides in a job, position, or assignment rather than in a person. For example, elected officials have the power to vote on the public's behalf; committee chairpersons are authorized to take control of their assigned tasks; supervisors have authority over their workers. The word *legitimate* means "lawful" or "proper." Most people believe it is lawful and proper that a judge make decisions and keep order in a courtroom. Group leaders may call meetings, assign tasks, and evaluate members as part of their legitimate duties.

### *Expert Power*

**Expert power** is assigned to someone who has demonstrated a particular skill or special knowledge. Just as we may accept the advice of a doctor when we're ill or that of an auto mechanic when we've broken down on the highway, we are more likely to grant power to an expert. When, however, the advice of supposed experts proves incorrect, their power will fade and even disappear. A leader can rely on expert power only if the group has recognized the leader as a well-informed and reliable authority.

### *Referent Power*

Hackman and Johnson write that "**referent power** is role model power—the ability to influence others that arises when one person admires another."<sup>7</sup> Referent power is the personal power or influence held by people who are admired and respected. When certain individuals demonstrate that they are effective communicators, talented organizers, shrewd problem solvers, and good listeners, we are more likely to be influenced by them. We often feel

honored to work with someone who has strong referent power. Referent or personal power is very influential because it is recognized and conferred by the group rather than by an outside source.

In most groups, a leader employs several kinds of power depending on the needs of the group and the situation. Some leaders may have the power to reward and coerce as well as having legitimate, expert, and referent power. In other groups, a leader may depend entirely on one type of power to get a group to work cooperatively toward a goal. The more power a leader has, the more carefully the use of that power must be balanced with the needs of the group. If you exert too much power, your group may lose its energy and enthusiasm. If you don't exert enough power, your group may flounder and fail. Gaining power is not the same as using it wisely.

## Becoming a Leader

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Anyone can become a leader. Abraham Lincoln and Harry S Truman rose from humble beginnings and hardship to become U.S. presidents. Exceptional athletes such as Arthur Ashe and Cal Ripken overcame enormous odds to become all-American heroes and spokespersons for worthy causes. Corporate executives have worked their way up from the sales force (Ross Perot) and secretarial pools (Ardis Krainik, General Director of the Lyric Opera of Chicago) to become chief executive officers. Yet, as inspiring as these examples may be, leaders are not necessarily the hardest workers or the smartest employees. The path to a leadership position can be as easy as being in the right place at the right time or being the only person willing to take on a difficult job. Becoming the leader, chairperson, or president of a group occurs in many different ways.

### *Designated Leaders*

**Designated leaders** are deliberately and purposely selected by a group or an outside authority. You may be hired for a job that gives you authority over others. You may be promoted or elected to a leadership position. Your boss may create a special work team or subcommittee and assign you to be its leader. In all these cases, the selection of the leader depends on an election or an appointment. Those who choose leaders should base their decisions on a candidate's qualifications and abilities. Unfortunately, less-than-deserving people are sometimes appointed or elected to powerful positions. Electing a compromise candidate or appointing a politically connected member as a leader is too common a practice and no guarantee of leadership ability. Is it possible, then, for a designated leader to be an effective leader? Of course it is. When a leader's abilities match the needs of the group and its goal, there is a greater likelihood of success.

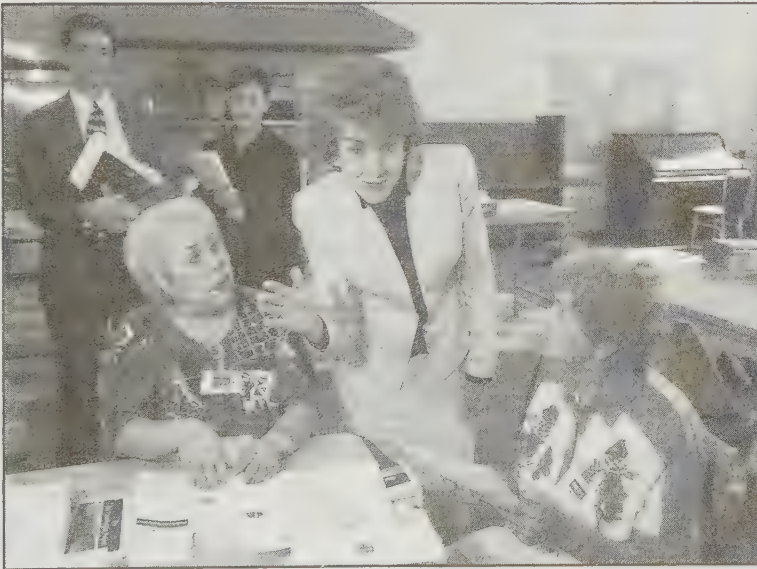
Unique challenges face a leader chosen by a source outside the group. When a new leader enters a well-established group, there can be a long and difficult period of adjustment for everyone. One student described this difficult process as follows:

For five summers, I worked as a counselor at a county day camp for underprivileged children. Harry was our boss and all of us liked him. We worked hard for Harry because we knew he'd look the other way if we showed up late or left early on a Friday. As long as the kids were safe and supervised, he didn't bother us. When Harry was promoted into management at the county government office, we got Frank. The first few weeks were awful. Frank would dock us if we were late. No one could leave early. He demanded that we come up with more activities for the kids. Weekend pool parties were banned. He even made us attend a counselors' meeting every morning rather than once every couple of weeks. But, in the end, most of us had to admit that Frank was a better camp director. The camp did more for the kids and that was the point.

Both Harry and Frank were leaders with legitimate power. What made them different were the various kinds of power available to them. Because Harry had earned the admiration and respect of the staff, he could rely on his personal, or referent, power. Frank, however, had to use coercive power to establish order.

Before designated leaders can effectively lead, they must gain the group's trust by demonstrating their competence and good character. Thus, if a leader appears to have good intentions yet is viewed as incompetent, members won't have faith in the leader's abilities. Likewise, a competent person with questionable motives will lack the trust of group members.<sup>8</sup>

When a leader is elected or appointed from within a group, the problems can be as difficult as with a leader from outside the group. If the person who



INDIVIDUALS with ordinary backgrounds can become exceptional leaders. What events or characteristics do you believe contribute to the success of such leaders? (© Kraft/Sygma)

once worked next to you becomes your boss, the adjustment can be problematic. Here is the way a business executive described how difficult it was when she was promoted to vice president:

When I was promoted, I became responsible for making decisions that affected my colleagues, many of whom were close friends. I was given the



authority to approve projects, recommend salary increases, and grant promotions. Colleagues who had always been open and honest with me were more cautious and careful about what they said. I had to deny requests from people I cared about while approving requests from colleagues with whom I often disagreed. Even though I'm the same person I was as a manager, I was treated differently and, as a result, I behaved differently.

Being plucked from a group in order to lead it can present problems because it changes the nature of your relationship with the other group members. Your fellow group members whom you consider friends wonder if that has changed. Others fear that you will favor your friends. Some members may resent that they were not chosen to lead the group. Even though the members know you well, you still must earn their trust in your leadership abilities. Initially, try involving the group in decision making as much as possible. Discuss ground rules for interaction with friends within the group while assuring them of your continued friendship. Finally, openly and honestly addressing leadership concerns with group members and seeking their suggestions may resolve many potential problems.<sup>9</sup> Whether you are an outsider or a promoted member newly designated to lead a group, it takes time and energy to develop group members' trust.

### *Emergent Leaders*

Very often, the most effective leadership occurs when a leader emerges from a group rather than being promoted, elected, or appointed. The leaders of many political, religious, and neighborhood organizations emerge. Ellis and Fisher maintain that "When people achieve leadership status gradually, the process is termed leadership emergence."<sup>10</sup> **Emergent leaders** gradually achieve leadership by interacting with group members and contributing to the achievement of the group's goal. The leader who emerges from within a group has significant advantages. He or she does not have to spend time learning about the group, its goals, and its norms. In addition, a leader who emerges from within a group has some assurance that the group wants him or her to be the leader rather than having to accept leadership because an election or outside authority says it must. Such leaders usually have referent power—a significant factor in mobilizing members toward the group's goal.

### *Strategies for Becoming a Leader*

Although there is no foolproof method, there are strategies that can improve your chances of emerging or being designated as a group's leader. The following strategies require a balanced approach, one that takes advantage of opportunities without abusing the privilege of leadership:

- Talk early and often (and listen).
- Know more (and share it).
- Offer your opinion (and welcome disagreement).
- Volunteer for meaningful roles (and follow through).

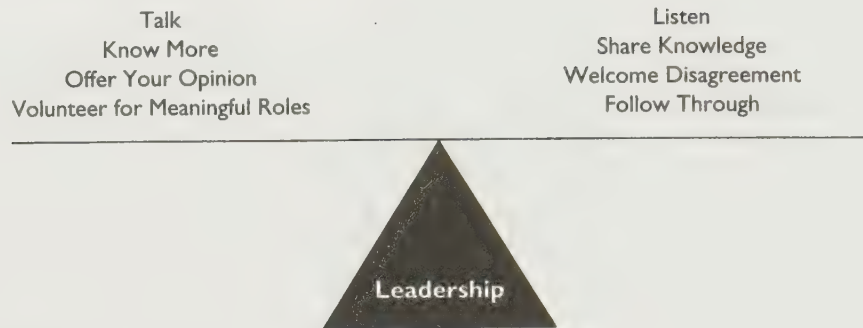


**Talk Early and Often (and Listen).** Of all the strategies that can help you attain the position of group leader, the most reliable have to do with when and how much you talk. According to Hollander, the person who speaks first and most often is more likely to emerge as the group's leader.<sup>11</sup> The number of contributions is even more important than the quality of those contributions. The quality of contributions becomes more significant after you become a leader. The link between participation and leadership "is the most consistent finding in small group leadership research."<sup>12</sup> Although talking early and often does not guarantee you a leadership position, failure to talk will keep you from being considered as a potential leader. Researchers have found that group members perceive talkative participants as "more competent, more confident, more interested in discussion, and more influential."<sup>13</sup> The strategy is simple: If you want to be a leader, talk early and often throughout the discussion. Don't overdo it, though. If you talk too much, members may think that you are not interested in or willing to listen to their contributions. As important as it is to talk, it is just as important to demonstrate your willingness and ability to listen to every member of the group.

**Know More (and Share It).** Leaders often emerge or are appointed because they are seen as experts—people who know more about an important topic. Even if a potential leader is only able to explain ideas and information more clearly than other group members, she or he may be perceived as knowing more. Groups need well-informed leaders; they do not need know-it-alls. Know-it-alls see their own comments as most important; leaders value everyone's contributions. Knowing more than other members may require hours of advance preparation. Members who want to become leaders understand that they must demonstrate their expertise without intimidating other group members.

### TOOLBOX 3.2 Listening and Leadership

Effective listening is one of the hallmarks of successful leadership. If you talk early and often but ignore or misinterpret what other group members say, you will not emerge or be highly successful as a leader. Effective leaders devote their full attention to making sure that they comprehend what is said. They also follow the golden listening rule: Listen to others as you would have them listen to you. In other words, suspend your own needs in order to listen to someone else's. **Chapter 6: Listening in Groups** offers guidelines for becoming a more effective and appreciated listener.



**FIGURE 3.2** Becoming a Leader: A Balanced Approach

**Offer Your Opinion (and Welcome Disagreement).** When groups are having difficulty making decisions or solving problems, they appreciate someone who can offer good ideas and informed opinions. Very often leaders will emerge when they help a group out of some difficulty. Offering ideas and opinions, however, is not the same as having those ideas accepted. Criticizing the ideas and opinions of others runs the risk of causing resentment and defensiveness. Bullying your way into a leadership position can backfire. If you are unwilling to compromise or listen to alternatives, the group may be unwilling to follow you. Effective leaders welcome constructive disagreement and discourage hostile confrontations. “They do not suppress conflict, they rise and face it.”<sup>14</sup>

**Volunteer for Meaningful Roles (and Follow Through).** The person who demonstrates a willingness to take on extra jobs that help the group achieve its goals is likely to be perceived as a potential leader. There are, however, jobs with limited leadership potential. Rarely will a group’s secretary, social chairperson, or the member assigned to take minutes become the leader. An aspiring leader, therefore, should avoid permanent assignment to these positions.

Volunteering, however, is not the same as follow-through. If you volunteer to write a report, the report should be well written and on time. If you volunteer to chair a subcommittee, the responsibility for that position should be taken seriously. If you volunteer but then fail to follow through, you only succeed in demonstrating why you should not become the group’s leader.

**Implications.** The strategies for becoming a leader are not necessarily the same strategies needed for successful leadership. Once you become a leader, you may find it necessary to listen more than talk, welcome better-informed members, criticize the opinions of others, and volunteer for a job no one else wants to do. Once you have emerged as leader, your focus should shift from becoming the leader to serving the group you lead.

Regardless of how you become a leader, it is critical to understand the difference between wanting to lead and wanting power. Group members who seek leadership positions because they crave power are trying to satisfy their own selfish needs. Effective leaders put members' needs and the group's goal ahead of their own needs. Power-hungry leaders use power in a way that allows no competition or conflict; effective leaders welcome such challenges. Leadership is not a power trip; it is a commitment to uniting the separate interests of group members in the pursuit of a higher, shared goal.<sup>15</sup>

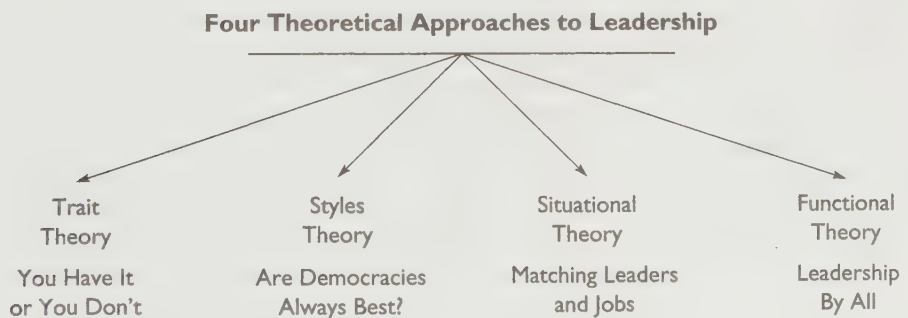
## Leadership Theories

Leadership is a quality that seems to defy accurate measurement. Bennis and Nanus point out that "no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders, and perhaps more important, what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective leaders. . . ."<sup>16</sup> Despite such inconclusive results, there is a lot to be learned from the many theories of leadership. In the following sections, we explain four different theoretical approaches to leadership.

### Trait Theory

The trait theory is often called the "Great Man" theory. It is based on what many people now believe is a myth—that leaders are born, not made. **Trait theory** attempts to identify and prescribe individual characteristics and behaviors needed for effective leadership.

Think of some of the leaders you most admire. What traits do they have? Most of us can come up with a list of desirable leadership traits that includes intelligence, ability to communicate, confidence, enthusiasm, organizational talent, and good listening skills. Most of us would gladly follow a leader with



**FIGURE 3.3** Leadership Theories

these qualities. The problem is that there is no guarantee that someone possessing these traits will be an effective leader. Furthermore, there are many effective leaders who possess only a few of these traits. Harriet Tubman, an illiterate runaway slave, did little talking but led hundreds of her people from bondage in the South to freedom in the North. Ross Perot, a little guy with big ears and a squeaky voice, became a business leader and serious contender for the U.S. presidency. Depending on the group and its circumstances, one set of traits may be less effective than another. Yet, some important implications of this theory are of value to anyone seeking and gaining a leadership position.

**Implications of Trait Theory.** According to one contemporary psychological theory, there is such a thing as a born or natural leader. Psychological type theory has produced a survey instrument called the **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®**, the most widely used, nonclinical personality inventory. Based on the idea that different kinds of people think differently and are interested in different things, psychological type theorists claim that they can identify “life’s natural leaders” or “extroverted thinkers” who use reasoning ability to control and direct those around them.<sup>17</sup> These people are usually enthusiastic, decisive, confident, organized, logical, and argumentative. They love to lead and can be excellent communicators. Although they often assume or win leadership positions, they may not necessarily be effective leaders.

Extroverted thinkers may intimidate and overpower others. They may be insensitive to the personal feelings and needs of group members. Women with such traits, moreover, are often perceived as arrogant and confrontational. Although many extroverted thinkers become leaders, they may need a less intense, more balanced approach in order to be effective leaders.

## *Styles Theory*

As a way of expanding the trait approach to the study of leadership, researchers began reexamining the traits they had collected. Rather than looking for individual leadership traits, they developed the **styles theory** of leadership—a collection of specific behaviors that could be identified as unique leadership styles. Actors work in different styles—tough or gentle, comic or tragic. Even sports teams differ in style; the South American soccer teams are known for their speed and grace, the European teams for their technical skill and aggressiveness. Different styles are attributed to leaders, too.

One of the first attempts to describe different leadership styles yielded three categories: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire.<sup>18</sup>

An autocrat is a person who has a great deal of power and authority, someone who maintains strict control over the group and its discussion. The **autocratic leader** tries to control the direction and outcome of a discussion, makes many of the group’s decisions, gives orders, expects followers to obey orders, focuses on achieving the group’s task, and takes responsibility for the results.



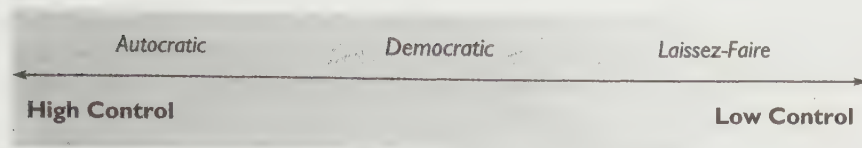


FIGURE 3.4 The Leadership Style Continuum

A **democratic leader** promotes the interests of group members and believes in and practices social equality. This type of leader shares decision making with the group, helps the group plan a course of action, focuses on the group's morale as well as on the task, and gives the entire group credit for success.

*Laissez-faire* is a French phrase that means "to let people do as they choose." A **laissez-faire leader** lets the group take charge of all decisions and actions. In mature and highly productive groups, a laissez-faire leader may be a perfect match for the group. Such a laid-back leadership style can generate a climate in which open communication is encouraged and rewarded. Unfortunately, there are laissez-faire leaders who do little or nothing to help a group when it needs decisive leadership.

**Implications of Styles Theory.** Many people assume that democratic leadership is always the best. There are, however, circumstances in which an autocratic style may be more effective. During a serious crisis there may not be enough time to discuss issues or consider the wishes of all members. In an emergency, a group may want its leader to take total responsibility.

Although groups led by autocratic leaders may be more efficient and, in the short run, more effective, democratic leadership has significant advantages. In groups with democratic leadership, members are often more satisfied with the group experience, more loyal to the leader, and more productive in the long run. Whereas members often fear or distrust an autocratic leader, they usually enjoy working with a democratic leader. Autocratic leaders may stifle critical opinions and creativity whereas a democratic leader can create a climate in which members' opinions and ideas are welcome. Not surprisingly, groups led by democratic leaders exhibit lower levels of stress and conflict along with higher levels of innovation and creative problem solving.<sup>19</sup>

It may be worthwhile to assess your own leadership style. If you have a tendency to interrupt group members who seem to be wasting time, to start meetings on time regardless of the social interaction occurring in the group, or to confront members with terse questions, you may be more of an autocratic than a democratic leader. There are costs to using the autocratic approach. By exerting excessive control, autocratic leaders may lower group morale and sacrifice long-term productivity. Unfortunately, many autocratic leaders defend such authoritarian actions by arguing that the group can't get the job done without the strict control of the leader.

Dr. Sandy Faber, a world-renowned astronomer, wrote about her experience as the leader of a group of six astronomers who developed a new theory about the expansion of the universe. An unfortunate back injury made her take a new look at her leadership style:

My usual style would have been to take center stage . . . and control the process. My back problem was at its worst . . . and instead I found myself lying flat on a portable cot in Donald's office. It is very hard to lead a group of people from a prone position. My energies were at a low ebb anyway. I found it very comfortable to lie back and avoid taking central responsibility. . . . It was the best thing that could have happened to us. The resultant power vacuum allowed each of us to quietly find our own best way to contribute. This lesson has stood me in good stead since. I now think that in small groups of able and motivated individuals, giving orders or setting up a well-defined hierarchy may generate more friction than it is designed to cure. If a good spirit of teamwork prevails, team leadership can be quite diffuse.<sup>20</sup>

If you have a tendency to ask open and general questions of the group as a whole, encourage participation from all members regardless of their status, and avoid dominating the group with your own opinion, you may be a democratic leader. Here, too, there are costs. Democratic leaders may sacrifice productivity by avoiding direct leadership. Many democratic leaders defend this approach by arguing that, regardless of the circumstance, the only way to make a good decision is to involve all group members. However, by failing to take charge in a crisis or curb a discussion when final decisions are needed, democratic leaders may be perceived as weak or indecisive by their followers.

Laissez-faire leaders are most effective in groups with very mature and productive members. Whether for lack of leadership skill or interest, laissez-faire leaders avoid taking charge or taking the time to prepare for complex and lengthy discussions. They can, however, assume procedural responsibilities that allow a group to speed up its progress and effectiveness.

Knowing whether your primary leadership style is autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire is helpful only if you also understand the ways in which that style affects the members of your group and the goal your group is working to achieve. Effective leadership cannot be classified like a chemical molecule or a style of automobile. Effective leaders must seek a balance between their natural traits or instinctive style and their ability to use other leadership strategies adapted to different group situations.

### *Situational Theory*

The situational approach assumes that leaders are made, not born, and that nearly everyone can be an effective leader under the right circumstances. Moreover, **situational theory** explains how leaders can become more effective

once they have carefully analyzed themselves, their group, and the circumstances in which they must lead. Rather than describing traits or styles, the situational approach seeks an ideal fit between leaders and leadership jobs.

One of the most influential theories of situational leadership was developed by the researcher Fred Fiedler. Fiedler's **Contingency Model of Leadership Effectiveness** is based on his study of hundreds of groups in numerous work settings.<sup>21</sup> A contingency is something that is dependent upon certain conditions. For example, a leader may not be able to implement a plan of action if members do not like or understand the plan. The contingency model of situational leadership suggests that effective leadership occurs only when there is an ideal match between the leader's style and the group's work situation.

**Leadership Style.** Rather than classifying leaders as autocratic or democratic, Fiedler characterizes them as either task-motivated or relationship-motivated. **Task-motivated leaders** want to get the job done; they gain satisfaction from completing a task even if the cost is bad feelings between the leader and group members. Task-motivated leaders may be criticized for being too bossy and too focused on the job rather than on the morale of the group. Sometimes task-motivated leaders take on the jobs of other group members because they're not satisfied with the quality or quantity of work done by others.

**Relationship-motivated** leaders gain satisfaction from working well with other people even if the cost is neglecting or failing to complete a task. Relationship-motivated leaders may be criticized for paying too much attention to how members feel and for tolerating disruptive members; they may appear inefficient and weak. Sometimes relationship-motivated leaders take on the jobs of other group members because they can't bring themselves to ask their colleagues to do more.

**The Situation.** Once you have determined your leadership style, the next step is to analyze the way in which your style matches the group's situation. According to Fiedler, there are three important dimensions to every situation: leader-member relationships, task structure, and power.

Fiedler claims that the most important factor in analyzing a situation is understanding the relationship between the leader and the group. Because **leader-member relations** can be positive, neutral, or negative, they can affect how a leader goes about mobilizing a group toward its goal. Are group members friendly and loyal to the leader and the rest of the group? Are they cooperative and supportive? Do they accept or resist the leader?

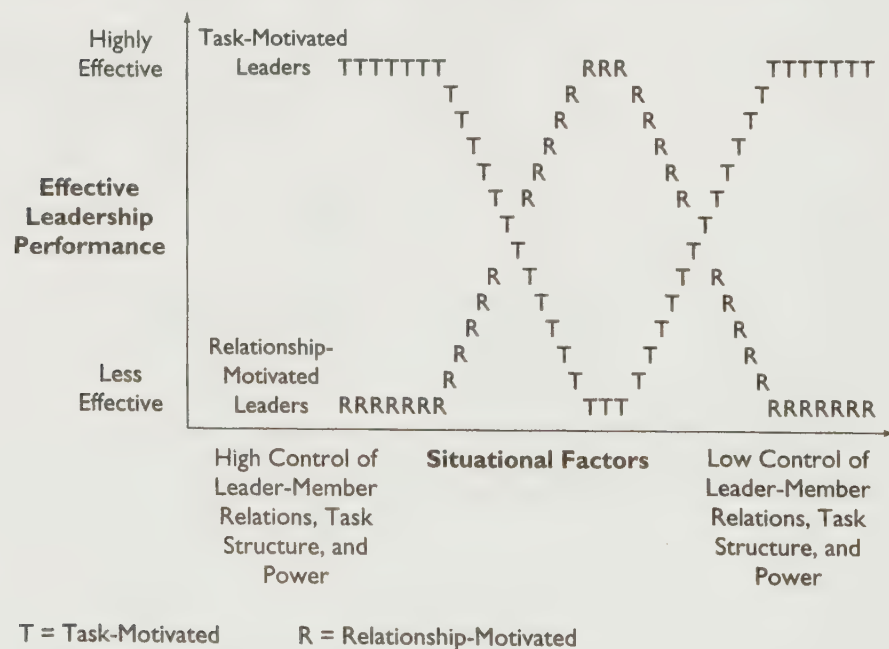
The second factor is rating the structure of the task. **Task structure** can range from disorganized and chaotic to highly organized and rule-driven. Are the goals and task clear? Is there an accepted procedure or set of steps

for achieving the goal? Are there well-established standards for measuring success?

The third situational factor is the amount of power and control the leader has. Is the source of that power an outside authority, or has the leader earned it from the group? What differences would the use of reward, coercive, legitimate, expert, and/or referent power have on the group?

**Matching the Leader and the Situation.** Fiedler's research suggests that there are ideal matches between leadership style and the group situation. Task-motivated leaders perform in extremes—such as when the situation is highly controlled or when it is almost out of control. Task-motivated leaders shine when there are good leader-member relationships, a clear task, and a lot of power. They also do well in stressful leadership jobs where there may be poor leader-member relationships, an unclear and unstructured task, and little control or power. Task-motivated leaders do well in extreme situations because their primary motivation is to take charge and get the job done.

Relationship-motivated leaders do well when there is a mix of conditions. They may have a structured task but an uncooperative group of followers. Rather than taking charge and getting the job done at all costs, the relationship-motivated leader uses diplomacy and works with group mem-



**FIGURE 3.5** Contingency Model of Leader Effectiveness



bers to improve leader–member relationships. If there are good leader–member relations but an unstructured task, the relationship-motivated leader may rely on the resources of the group to develop a plan of action. Whereas a task-motivated leader might find these situations frustrating, a relationship-motivated leader will be quite comfortable.

**Implications of Situational Theory.** According to the situational approach, once you know your leadership style and have analyzed the situation in which you must lead, you can begin to predict how successful you will be as a leader. If you are a task-motivated leader, you should feel confident if asked to take on a highly structured or highly unstructured task. If completing the group’s task is your major concern and motivation, you should feel confident if asked to lead a group that is unable and unwilling to pursue its goal.

Relationship-motivated leaders have different factors to consider. If there is a moderate degree of structure, a relationship-motivated leader may be more successful. If people issues are your major concern, you should feel confident if asked to lead a group that is able but somewhat unwilling to complete its task.

Unfortunately, you cannot always choose when and where you will lead. You may find yourself assigned or elected to a leadership situation that does not match your leadership style. Rather than trying to change your leadership style, you may find it easier to change the situation you are leading. For example, if leader–member relations are poor, you may decide that your first task is to gain the group’s trust and support. You can schedule time to listen to members’ problems or take nonmeeting time to get to know key individuals in the group.

If your task is highly unstructured, you can exert your leadership by providing structure or by dividing the task into smaller, easier-to-achieve subunits. On the other hand, you may find yourself in a leadership situation where the task is so highly structured there is almost no need for leadership. The group knows exactly what to do. Rather than allowing the group to become bored, ask for or introduce new and less structured tasks to challenge the group.

Finally, you may be able to modify the amount of power you have. If you are reluctant to use coercive power or if you don’t have enough legitimate power, you can earn referent power by demonstrating your leadership ability. If you have a great deal of power and run the risk of intimidating group members, you may want to delegate some of your duties and power.

All the preceding strategies rely on leaders who understand who they are, who recognize the way in which they are motivated to lead, and who have analyzed the group’s situation. Rather than wishing you were born with leadership traits or waiting for situations that match your style, the situational approach suggests ways to improve your leadership ability.

## Functional Theory

Like the situational approach, the **functional theory** of leadership assumes that people are not born as leaders but learn to function as leaders. Unlike the situational approach, the functional approach focuses on what a leader does rather than who a leader is. Even more significant, the functional approach does not assume that leadership is the sole responsibility of one person—the leader. Instead, it assumes that anyone in a group can and should help the group achieve its goal. There are no rules dictating that only the leader can motivate group members, provide procedural suggestions, or solve group problems. Leadership is a job, not a person. And, according to the functional approach to leadership, any capable group member can assume leadership functions when necessary.

**Implications of Functional Theory.** Although the functional approach can shift leadership responsibilities to anyone capable of performing them, doing so does not mean that leadership is unnecessary. Just the opposite may be true. If one participant is better at motivating members while another member excels at keeping the group on track, the group may be better off with both members assuming such leadership functions than if it relies on a single person to assume these important responsibilities.

Another significant implication to the functional approach to leadership is its focus on communication strategies and skills. Rather than relying on a leader's natural traits, styles, or motivation, the functional approach concentrates on what a leader says and does in a group situation. An information-giver, a compromiser, or even a dominator functions by communicating. Given the nature of group discussions, most of these functional leadership behaviors require effective communication skills.

### TOOLBOX 3.3 Functional Theory and Participation

Because functional theory maintains that any group member can assume specific leadership tasks, it may be more of a participation theory than a leadership theory. As a theory of participation, functional theory assumes that the behavior of every member is critical to the group's success or failure. The theory divides group members' behaviors into three categories: (1) group task functions such as information giver, evaluator, and energizer; (2) group maintenance functions such as compromiser, tension releaser, and gatekeeper; and (3) self-centered functions such as blocker, dominator, and recognition seeker. An effective leader would assume most task and maintenance roles described by functional theory while minimizing or avoiding self-centered functions. **Chapter 4: Participation in Groups** uses functional theory to describe the most common roles found in groups.

## Gender and Leadership

In the early studies of leadership, there was an unwritten but additional prerequisite for becoming a leader: Be a man. Yet there have been and continue to be exceptional women leaders: Clara Barton, Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Margaret Sanger, Eleanor Roosevelt, Madeleine Albright, and Gloria Steinem; Representatives Shirley Chisholm and Barbara Jordan; Senators Margaret Chase Smith, Diane Feinstein, and Carol Moseley Braun; Attorney General Janet Reno; and Governors Ann Richards and Christine Todd Whitman. Despite the achievements of these individuals, some people still question the ability of women to serve in leadership positions. These doubts are based on long-held prejudices rather than on valid evidence.

In a summary of the research on leadership and gender, Shimanoff and Jenkins conclude that “women are still less likely to be preselected as leaders, and the same leadership behavior is often evaluated more positively when attributed to a male than a female.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, even when women talk early and often, are well prepared and always present at meetings, offer valuable ideas, and volunteer for important tasks, a man who has done the same

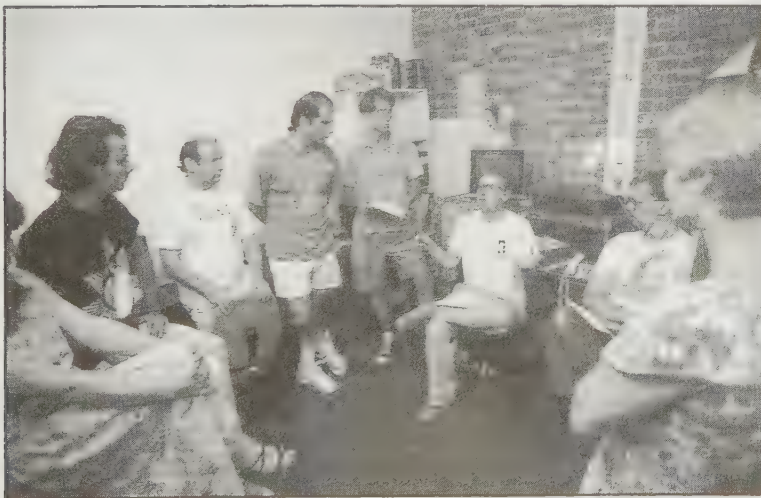
things is more likely to emerge as leader. After examining the research on gender and leadership, Napier and Gershenfeld conclude that “even though male and female leaders may act the same, there is a tendency for women to be perceived more negatively or to have to act differently to gain leadership.”<sup>23</sup>

Do male and female leaders differ? According to Julia Wood, dissimilarities may be explained by differences in male-female communication styles:

Leadership . . . is typically linked with masculine styles of communication—assertive-

ness, independence, competitiveness, confidence. . . . Deference, inclusivity, collaboration, and cooperation, which are prioritized in women’s speech communities, are linked with subordinate roles rather than with leadership.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, there is a perception that male leaders are (or are expected to be) more assertive and task oriented, whereas women leaders devote (or are expected



EFFECTIVE leaders select communication strategies that mobilize a group toward achieving shared goals. What might you conclude about the leadership of this group? (Mark Richards/PhotoEdit)



to devote) more attention to the social and emotional needs of group members. Because men usually talk more, they may have the advantage of being able to “talk early and often.” However, women who do talk may find that their ideas carry less weight than the same ideas expressed by a man.

Deborah Tannen has described the difficulties that women have in leadership positions.<sup>25</sup> If their behavior is similar to that of male leaders, they are perceived as unfeminine. If they act “like a lady,” they are viewed as weak or ineffective. One professional woman described this dilemma as follows:

I was thrilled when my boss evaluated me as “articulate, hard-working, mature in her judgment, and a skillful diplomat.” What disturbed me were some of the evaluation comments from those I supervise or work with as colleagues. Although they had a lot of good things to say, a few of them described me as “pushy,” “brusque,” “impatient,” “has a disregard for social niceties,” and “hard-driving.” What am I supposed to do? My boss thinks I’m energetic and creative while other people see the same behavior as pushy and aggressive.

The preference for male leaders may come down to a fear of or an unwillingness to adjust to different kinds of leaders. Because many people have worked in groups that were led by men, they may feel uncomfortable when leadership shifts to a woman.

Instead of asking whether a female leader is different from a male leader, it is more important to ask whether she is an effective leader. Regardless of gender, effective leaders select strategies that mobilize groups toward achieving shared goals.

## *B*alanced Leadership

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The leader performs the most difficult balancing act in a group. Much like a tightrope walker who juggles during a death-defying walk across open space, a group leader must juggle many interests and issues while propelling a group toward its goal. The leader must exert control without stifling creativity. The leader must balance the requirements of the task with the social needs of group members. The leader must resolve conflict without losing the motivation and energy that results from conflict and must encourage participation from quiet members without stifling the enthusiasm and contributions of active members. The effective leader juggles all of these variables while mobilizing a group’s resources in pursuit of a common goal that unifies both leaders and followers. The job of a juggling tightrope walker may seem easy compared to balancing all of these leadership tasks.



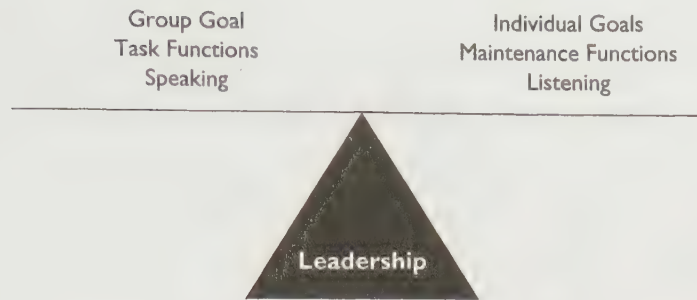


FIGURE 3.6 Balanced Leadership

Kevin Freiberg claims that effective “leaders have both the desire and ability to create an environment where the wants and needs of followers can be satisfied. They are particularly adept at using their skills and insight to establish a balance between cooperative common action and the fulfillment of individual goals.”<sup>26</sup> Achieving balanced leadership does not depend on developing a particular trait or style but depends rather on a leader’s ability to analyze a situation and select leadership strategies that help mobilize a group to achieve its goal.

## Summary Study Guide

- A leader mobilizes group members toward a goal shared by the leader and followers. Leadership is a process that requires the ability to make strategic decisions and use communication to mobilize others toward achieving a shared goal.
- Leadership power can be categorized as reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, and referent power.
- Designated leaders are selected by an outside authority or elected by a group; emergent leaders come from within a group and gradually assume leadership functions.
- Strategies for becoming a leader include talking early and often, knowing more, offering opinions, and volunteering.
- Trait theory attempts to identify individual characteristics and behaviors needed for effective leadership.
- Styles theory describes the strengths and weaknesses of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leaders.

- Situational theory seeks an ideal fit between a leader's style (task or relationship motivated) and three dimensions of the group's work situation (leader-member relations, the task structure, and the leader's power).
- Functional theory focuses on what leaders do rather than on who leaders are; anyone in a group can assume leadership functions.
- Women are less likely to be selected as leaders; the same leadership behavior is often evaluated more positively when attributed to a man than to a woman.

## Groupwork *Wanted: A Few Good Leaders*

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**GOAL** To analyze and discuss different perceptions of effective leadership.

**PARTICIPANTS** 3–7 members

### PROCEDURE

1. Each student should complete *The Least-Preferred Coworker Scale* at the end of this chapter.
  2. After everyone has completed the scale, they should form groups based on similar individual results, e.g. relationship-motivated students should join the same groups and task-motivated students should join groups with each other.
  3. Each group should then work to write a description of the desired characteristics, skills, and/or duties of a potential leader in the form of a want ad in the employment section of a newspaper. Each advertisement should begin with "WANTED: LEADER The ideal candidate for this job will . . ."
  4. Each group should post its job description of a leader and have a spokesperson present it to the class.
  5. The class should then discuss the following questions:
    - What are the similarities among the want ads?
    - What are the differences among the want ads?
    - Which leadership theories apply to each want ad?
    - In what ways did group members' preferences for relationship motivation or task motivation affect the words they chose to include in each want ad?
    - Who was the leader in each group? Did the group designate a leader or did one emerge?
-

## The Least-Preferred Coworker Scale

**Directions** All of us have worked better with some people than with others. Think of the one person in your life with whom you have worked least well, a person who might cause you difficulty in doing a job or completing a task. This person may be someone with whom you have worked recently or someone you have known in the past. This coworker must be the single individual with whom you have had the most difficulty getting a job done, with whom you would least want to work.

On the scale below, describe this person by circling the number that best represents your perception of this person. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not omit any items, and circle a number for each item only once.

Pleasant	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unpleasant
Friendly	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unfriendly
Rejecting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Accepting
Tense	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Relaxed
Distant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Close
Cold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Warm
Supportive	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Hostile
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Interesting
Quarrelsome	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Harmonious
Gloomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Cheerful
Open	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Guarded
Backbiting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Loyal
Untrustworthy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Trustworthy
Considerate	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Inconsiderate
Nasty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Nice
Agreeable	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Disagreeable
Insincere	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Sincere
Kind	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Unkind

### Scoring

Obtain your Least-Preferred Coworker (LPC) score by adding up the numbers you circled on the preceding scale. Your score should range between 18 and 144.

(continued)

**(The Least-Preferred Coworker Scale, *continued*)**

*Relationship-Motivated Leader.* If your score is 73 or above, you derive satisfaction from good relationships with group members. You are most successful when a situation has just enough uncertainty to challenge you: moderate leader-member relations, moderate task structure, and moderate power.

*Task-Motivated Leader.* If your score is 64 or below, you derive satisfaction from getting things done. You are most successful when a situation has clear guidelines or no guidelines at all: excellent or poor leader-member relations, highly structured or unstructured tasks, and high or low power.

*Relationship- and Task-Motivated Leader.* If your score is between 65 and 72, you may be flexible enough to function in both leadership styles.

Source: *The Least-Preferred Coworker Scale* reprinted from *Improving Leadership Effectiveness: The Leader Match Concept*, 2nd edition, Fiedler, F. E. & Chemers, M. M. © 1984 John Wiley & Sons, Inc., pp. 17–42. Reprinted by permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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# *Participation in Groups*

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**Who Wants to Be a Follower?****Theories of Participation**

Functional Theory

Personality Type Theory

Implications of Participation Theories

**Guidelines for Participation**

Readiness

Willingness

Ability

**Dealing with Difficulties**

Apathy

Deviant Members

Hidden Agendas

**Balanced Participation**

## Who Wants to Be a Follower?

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Without followers, there would be no one to lead. As obvious as this statement is to anyone who has ever worked in a group, followers are much less frequently analyzed than leaders.

We have thousands of books on leadership, none on followership. I have heard college presidents tell their students that schools are meant to train leaders. I have never heard anyone profess to train followers. The ideal seems to be a world in which everyone is a leader—but who will be left for them to be leading?<sup>1</sup>

In the United States, we place great value on leaders, but rarely do we stop to understand or appreciate followers. Bennis and Biederman maintain that our obsession with leadership has resulted in the mistaken notion that extraordinary achievements are primarily the result of great leaders rather than the collaborative efforts of great groups. They point to the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel as a classic example. Most of us have an image of Michelangelo laboring alone, when in fact thirteen people worked with him.<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, this admiration and awe of leaders is not shared by all cultures. In some countries, standing out from or above the crowd is considered arrogant. Loyal, hard-working followers are admired. In the United States, however, there often is a negative view of followers. Garry Wills captured this perception in his book *Certain Trumpets: The Call of Leaders*.

Talk about the nobility of leaders, the need for them, our reliance on them, raises the clear suspicion that followers are *not* so noble, not needed—that there is something demeaning about being a follower. In that view, leaders only rise by sinking others to subordinate roles.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, none of the preceding suspicions about followers has merit in an effective group. In such groups, leaders and followers share a common vision; they develop plans together; they combine their willpower in a concerted effort to achieve a goal.

Rather than being a herd of sheep to be shepherded and led, effective followers are full partners and active participants who help develop a group's vision and course of action. In the best groups, followers have a say about where they are being led. Leaders need good followers who are ready, willing, and able to fulfill their critical roles group participants.

## Theories of Participation

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In Chapter 3, four different theoretical approaches provided information and advice about effective leadership behavior. There are also theories of

participation. By understanding two of these theories—functional theory and personality type theory—we can identify participation strategies that can help a group achieve its goals.

## Functional Theory

In 1948, Benne and Sheats published an essay in which they labeled and described the functional roles they had observed in groups.<sup>4</sup> We have modified the original Benne and Sheats list by adding or combining functional behaviors that we have observed in groups, as well as roles identified by other writers and researchers.

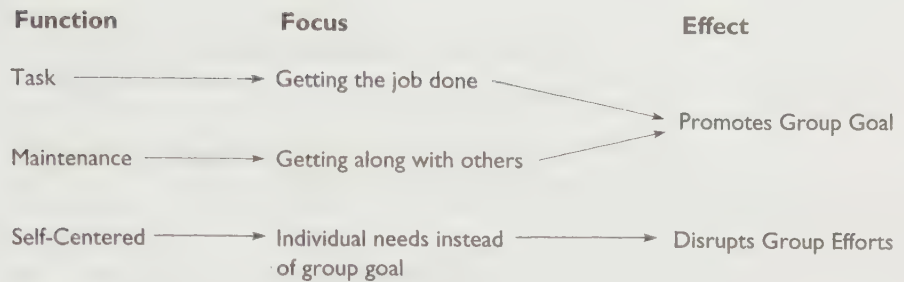
The following sections divide twenty-five participant roles into three functional categories: group task roles, group maintenance roles, and self-centered roles.

Group **task functions** affect a group's ability to achieve its goals by focusing on behavior that helps get the job done. Group **maintenance functions** affect how group members get along with each other while pursuing a shared goal. They are concerned with building relationships and keeping the group cohesive and cooperative. **Self-centered functions** describe negative roles in which individual needs are put ahead of the group's goal and other members' needs. In the following section, each functional role is categorized, named, described, and illustrated with a statement that might be heard from a discussant assuming such a role.

### Group Task Roles.

1. *Initiator.* Proposes ideas and suggestions; provides direction for the group; gets the group started.  
"Let's begin by trying to look at the problem from the client's point of view."
2. *Information Seeker.* Asks for needed facts and figures; requests explanations and clarification of ideas; makes the group aware of information gaps.  
"How can we decide on a policy for disabled students without knowing more about the new federal laws and regulations?"
3. *Information Giver.* Provides the group with relevant information; researches, organizes, and presents needed information.  
"I checked with our minority affairs officer and she said . . ."
4. *Opinion Seeker.* Asks for others' opinions; tests for group opinions and consensus; tries to discover what others believe or feel about an issue.  
"Lyle, what do you think? Will it work?"
5. *Opinion Giver.* States personal beliefs and interpretations; shares feelings; offers analysis and arguments.  
"I don't agree that radio ads are the answer because they'll use up our entire promotional budget."





**FIGURE 4.1** Functional Theory's Role Categories

6. *Clarifier-Summarizer*. Explains ideas and their consequences; reduces confusion; sums up group progress and conclusions.

"We've been trying to analyze this problem for the last hour. Let me see if I can list the three causes we've identified so far."

7. *Evaluator-Critic*. Assesses ideas, arguments, and suggestions; functions as the group's critical thinker; diagnoses task and procedural problems.

"I think we've forgotten something here. The building figures don't take into account monthly operating costs such as utilities and maintenance."

8. *Energizer*. Motivates group members to do their best; helps create enthusiasm for the task and, if needed, a sense of urgency; serves as the group's "cheerleader."

"This is incredible! We may be the first department to come up with such a unique and workable solution to this problem."

9. *Procedural Technician*. Assists with preparations for meetings including suggesting agenda items, making room arrangements, and providing needed materials and equipment.

"Before our next meeting, let me know whether any of you will need an overhead projector or a flip chart."

10. *Recorder-Secretary*. Keeps and provides accurate written records of a group's major ideas, suggestions, and decisions.

"Maggie, please repeat your two deadline dates so I can get them into the minutes."

### Group Maintenance Roles.

1. *Encourager-Supporter*. Praises and agrees with group members; provides recognition and person-to-person encouragement; listens empathetically.

"The information you found has been a big help. Thanks for taking all that time to find it."

2. *Harmonizer*. Helps resolve conflicts; mediates differences among group members; emphasizes teamwork and the importance of everyone getting along.  
 "I know we're starting to get on each other's nerves, but we're almost done. Let's put aside our differences and finish up."
3. *Compromiser*. Offers suggestions that minimize differences; helps the group reach consensus; searches for solutions acceptable to everyone.  
 "It looks as though no one is going to agree on this one. Maybe we can improve the old system rather than trying to come up with a brand new way of doing it."
4. *Tension Releaser*. Alleviates tension with friendly humor; breaks the ice and cools hot tempers; monitors tension levels and tries to relax the group.  
 "Can Karen and I arm wrestle to decide who gets the assignment?"
5. *Gatekeeper*. Monitors participation; encourages quiet members to speak and talkative members to stop speaking; tries to control the flow of communication.  
 "I think we've heard from everyone except Sophie, and I know she has strong feelings on this issue."
6. *Observer-Interpreter*. Explains what others are trying to say; monitors and interprets feelings and nonverbal communication; expresses group feelings; paraphrases other members.  
 "I sense that you two are not really disagreeing. Tell me if I'm wrong, but I think that both of you are saying that we should . . ."
7. *Follower*. Supports the group and its members; accepts others' ideas and assignments; serves as an attentive audience member.  
 "That's fine with me. Just tell me when it's due."

### Self-Centered Roles.

1. *Aggressor*. Puts down members to get what he or she wants; is sarcastic toward and critical of others; may take credit for someone else's work or idea.  
 "It's a good thing I had time to rewrite our report. There were so many mistakes in it, we would have been embarrassed by it."
2. *Blocker*. Stands in the way of progress; presents negative, disagreeable, and uncompromising positions; uses delaying tactics to derail an idea or proposal.  
 "There's no way I'm signing off on this idea if you insist on putting Gabriel in charge of the project."
3. *Dominator*. Prevents others from participating; asserts authority and tries to manipulate others; interrupts others and monopolizes discussion.  
 "That's nuts, Wanda. Right off the top of my head I can think of at least four major reasons why we can't do it your way. The first reason is . . ."

4. *Recognition Seeker*. Boasts about personal accomplishments; tries to impress others and become the center of attention; pouts or disrupts the discussion if not getting enough attention.  
 “As the only person here to have ever won the company’s prestigious top achiever award, I personally suggest that . . . .”
5. *Clown*. Injects inappropriate humor or commentary into the group; seems more interested in goofing off than working; distracts the group.  
 “Listen—I’ve been working on this outrageous impersonation of the boss. I’ve even got his funny walk down.”
6. *Deserter*. Withdraws from the group; appears “above it all” and annoyed or bored with the discussion; remains aloof or stops contributing.  
 “I have to leave now. I have to go to a very important meeting.”
7. *Confessor*. Seeks emotional support from the group; shares very personal feelings and problems with members; uses the group for emotional support.  
 “I had an argument with my boyfriend yesterday. I could really use some advice. Let me start at the beginning.”
8. *Special Interest Pleader*. Speaks on behalf of an outside group or a personal interest; tries to influence group members to support nongroup interests.  
 “Let’s hire my brother-in-law to cater our annual dinner. We’d get better food than the usual rubber chicken.”

Depending on your group’s goal, the nature of its task, and the attitudes or abilities of other members, you could function in several different roles. If you know the most about the topic being discussed, your primary function might be that of information giver. If two members are locked in a serious disagreement, you might help your group by functioning as a harmonizer. And, if you strongly believe that the group is heading toward a disastrous decision, you might even decide to take on the function of a blocker in order to prevent the group from making a mistake. In the best of all possible groups, all the task and maintenance functions should be available as strategies to mobilize a group toward its goal.

## Personality Type Theory

When different personalities join together in pursuit of a common goal, the resulting combination of traits may be harmonious and complementary, or disruptive and chaotic. Understanding personality theories can help a group balance its collection of unique temperaments and talents. Schutz’s FIRO theory, discussed in Chapter 2, is an example of a personality theory that explains member motivation and behavior as attempts to satisfy inclusion, control, and affection needs.

In Chapter 3, another personality theory, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator®, was introduced to explain why some people are described as natural

leaders. This personality type theory can also explain why and how certain group members react to specific suggestions and circumstances. In order to appreciate the ways in which personality types can affect the behavior of group members, it is necessary to understand several of the assumptions underlying this theory. Isabel Briggs Myers and her daughter, Katherine Briggs, developed a personality type measure that examines the different ways in which people see and understand the world around them as well as the different ways people reach conclusions and make decisions about what they have seen. Myers-Briggs, as the measure is known, looks at “the very way people *prefer* to use their minds, specifically, the way they perceive and the way they make judgments.”<sup>5</sup>

According to Myers-Briggs, all of us have preferences of thought and behavior that can be divided into four categories, with two opposite preferences in each category. As you read about the following categories and traits, ask yourself which preferences best describe the reasons you choose one way of reacting or behaving over another.

**Extrovert or Introvert.** These two traits relate to where you like to focus your attention—outward or inward. **Extroverts** are outgoing; they talk more, gesture more, and can become quite enthusiastic during a discussion. Extroverts get their energy by being with people. They enjoy solving problems in groups and like to involve others in projects. In a group setting, extroverts may have a tendency to dominate the discussion without listening to others. At the same time, they can be terrific energizers and contributors. **Introverts** think before they speak. Although they may have a great deal to offer in a group discussion, they can find the experience exhausting. Introverts recharge by being alone; they often prefer to work by themselves rather than in groups.

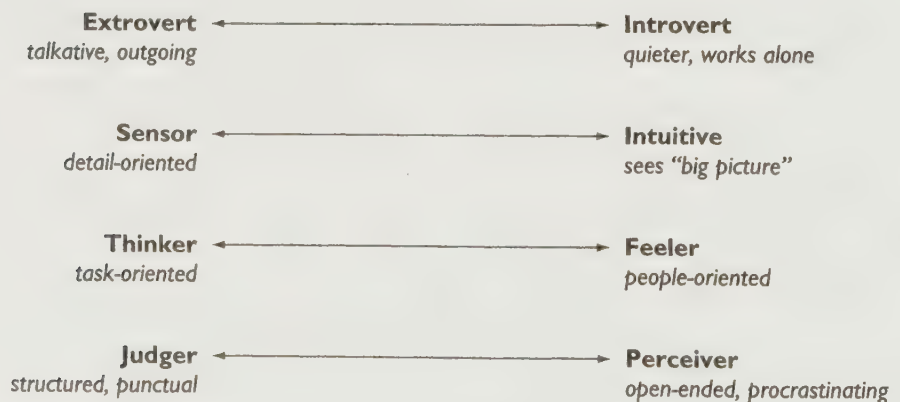


FIGURE 4.2 Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® Preferences



Knowing whether you or another group member tends to be an extrovert or an introvert can be valuable. Whereas an extrovert is likely to prefer working on a subcommittee, an introvert may prefer a solo assignment. Because introverts need more time to think before they speak or act, a group may miss out on good ideas and needed analysis if it rushes into solutions proposed by enthusiastic extroverts.

Levasseur reports that misunderstandings between extroverts and introverts are common in groups. “Extroverts complain that introverts don’t speak up at the right time in meetings. Introverts criticize extroverts for talking too much and not listening well.”<sup>6</sup> Effective groups try to balance the needs of both personality types by accommodating the differences in communication style and tapping the best ideas from all members.

**Sensor or Intuitive.** These two traits focus on the way you look at the world around you—whether you see the trees or the forest. **Sensors** focus on details and prefer to concentrate on one task at a time. In groups, they may uncover minor flaws in an idea and request detailed instructions for completing a task. **Intuitives** look for connections and concepts rather than rules and flaws. They like to come up with big ideas but become bored with details.

In a group, sensors and intuitives may see things quite differently. According to Jaffe, sensors focus on regulations, step-by-step explanations, and facts, whereas intuitives focus on outwitting regulations, supplying theoretical explanations, and ignoring details.<sup>7</sup> Conflict between these two types can decrease group productivity.

Groups need both kinds of members in order to function effectively and efficiently. In the example that follows, Larson and LaFasto emphasize the importance of having a balance between the “nuts and bolts types” and those individuals who are capable of being creative and conceptual:

... in the construction business it’s important to have the “big picture” people who can see the conceptual side of a project and know when major changes are necessary. This needs to be balanced, however, by people who are at the job site supervising the very detail-oriented portions of the work. Both are necessary members of a good project team.<sup>8</sup>

**Thinker or Feeler.** These two traits explain how you go about making decisions. **Thinkers** are task-oriented. They take pride in their ability to think objectively and logically. Thinkers often enjoy arguing and making difficult decisions. Like the task-motivated leader, thinkers want to get the job done even if the cost is poor feelings among some group members. **Feelers** are people-oriented. Relationship-motivated leaders are probably feelers who want everyone to get along. Feelers will spend time and effort helping other members.

When thinkers and feelers work together in groups, there is a potential for misunderstanding. Thinkers may appear unemotional and aggressive. Feelers may annoy others by “wasting” time with social chit-chat. However, when thinkers and feelers recognize their differences as decision makers, they can form an unbeatable team. While the thinkers make decisions and move the group forward, feelers make sure the group is working harmoniously.

**Judger or Perceiver.** The last two traits focus on how you deal with the outer world and its problems. **Judgers** are highly structured and well organized. They plan ahead, follow lengthy “To Do” lists, and like closure. Judgers are very punctual and can become impatient with participants who show up late or waste time. **Perceivers** are less rigid than judgers. Because they like open-endedness, being on time is less important than being flexible and adaptable. Perceivers are risk-takers willing to try new options. They often procrastinate and end up in a frenzy to complete a task on time.

Judgers and perceivers often have difficulty working together. To a judger, a perceiver may appear scatterbrained. To a perceiver, a judger may appear rigid and controlling. Kroeger and Thuesen have described the problems that judgers and perceivers have in the same group. Whereas judgers come prepared to make decisions and solve problems, perceivers wish they “could just leave the room and come back when it’s over.”<sup>9</sup>

### *Implications of Participation Theories*

Just as it was desirable to have every task and maintenance function assumed by at least one member of a group, the same is true for personality traits. A group without judgers can miss deadlines and fail to achieve its goal. A group without a sensor can overlook important details or critical flaws in a proposal. Although it is tempting to choose members who are just like you, a group will be much better off with representatives of every type. According to Kroeger and Thuesen, in an ideal group “we would have a smattering of Extroverts, Introverts, Sensors, Intuitives, Thinkers, Feelers, Judgers, and Perceivers—and we would put them together in such a way that they would not only understand their differences but could also draw upon them.”<sup>10</sup>

Functional and personality theories help us understand and explain how groups work. When you understand that some members are harmonizers while others dominate the discussion, you can take advantage of the maintenance function while trying to minimize the self-centered function. When you understand why extroverted judgers are argumentative whereas introverted feelers are more congenial and agreeable, you can use the strengths of each type to compensate for the weaknesses of the other. Without underlying theories of participation, you will not know why some participant strategies succeed in one situation but fail in another.

## Guidelines for Participation

When groups have to share information, motivate members, make decisions, and solve problems, everyone has a stake in the outcome. When a conscientious self-management team hires a new team member, everyone should be involved in the process of reviewing applications and discussing the merits of each candidate. When an experienced convention committee selects a site for an upcoming conference, each member brings unique viewpoints and expertise to the deliberations. In both examples, the qualities that characterize an ideal group member's effective participation can be divided into three categories: readiness, willingness, and an ability to help the group achieve its goal.

**Readiness** Readiness means being prepared, in advance, for a discussion or group task. Most people would not give a speech or agree to an important interview without, at least, thinking about what they want to say. Why is it, then, that group members show up for meetings with little or no preparation? Group discussants must be well prepared to deal with a host of predictable as well as unpredictable issues and people.

Valuable discussion time and even entire meetings are wasted when group members fail to do their "homework." What is the point of discussing job applicants if some people have not read the applications and resumes? What is the point of discussing possible convention sites if no one knows whether the suggested hotels are available or affordable?

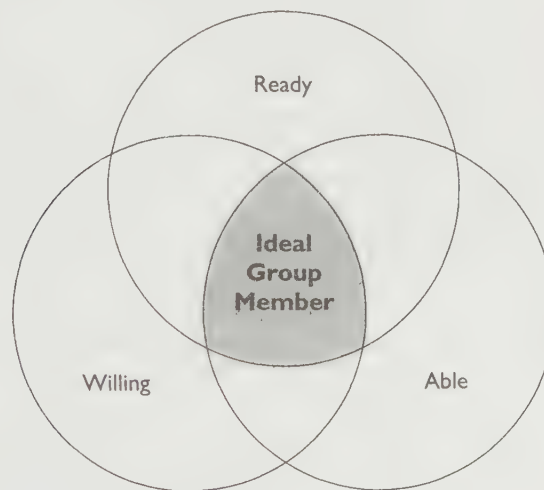


FIGURE 4.3 Ideal Group Member

**TOOLBOX 4.1** Research and Preparation

As soon as you know the topics and issues that may come up in a discussion, you should begin the preparation process by collecting ideas and information. Unless you are an expert or are well acquainted with all of the possible issues for discussion, you will need to do research. Conducting interviews, reading published materials, and searching electronic databases are avenues for becoming better informed. Attending a meeting equipped with facts, testimony, statistics, definitions, descriptions, and examples can demonstrate that you are ready to serve the needs of your group. The methods and tools for becoming a well-informed group member are described in **Chapter 12: Informed Groups**.

**Willingness**

Willingness means making a commitment to act and accept responsibility before, during, and after a group discussion. Whereas readiness requires planning, critical thinking, and time, willingness is an attitude, a mental commitment to the group's goal and its members.

Levasseur's *Breakthrough Business Meetings* lists these characteristics of a committed member: willingness to learn from others, to share, to work as a team, to do what needs to be done, to be flexible, to listen, to exercise responsibility, to deal with conflict, to treat others as you want to be treated. Your willingness and level of commitment to a group can differ depending on whether you see your primary role as a follower, an active participant, or both.<sup>11</sup> In other words, commitment comes from a shared sense of ownership and a willingness to do what is needed to achieve a group's goal.<sup>12</sup>

There are groups and circumstances in which willing **followers** are needed to fulfill a group's mission. In addition to energizers and initiators, groups need people who are willing to accept group decisions and carry them out. If you are a good follower, you do what must be done. For example, whereas some committee members may be wined and dined by a hotel seeking convention business, other members must be willing to plan programs, monitor budgets, and prepare publicity.

Regardless of the group or its goal, you should try to balance what you are willing to do with your group's expectations and needs. Sometimes you can make a full commitment to a group as an active participant. At other times, you may not be able to do much more than be a loyal follower.

**Ability**

Ability refers to the skills or competencies needed to make a significant contribution to your group. Being ready and willing does not guarantee that you will be able to do what is needed in a group. In a group discussion, two kinds of abil-





WHAT would happen if one of these firefighters was not ready, willing, or able to work with the team? What types of communication or technical skills does this group need? (Spencer Grant/Stock Boston)

ities directly affect your performance and productivity—communication skills and technical skills.

Almost every group function described in this chapter requires communication skills. Group members must be able to speak and listen during group discussions. At a more personal level, they need the ability to relate to the feelings and needs of others. Because most of this textbook is devoted to speaking and listening in groups, little more will be said in this section about these essential and critical skills in a group discussion.

Technical skills refer to specialized abilities, knowledge, and talents needed by a group to achieve its goals. Larson and LaFasto describe these skills as “what a team member must know or be able to do well in order to have a reasonable chance of achieving the team’s objective.”<sup>13</sup> They conclude that the real trick is figuring out which critical skills are needed and what the balance of those skills should be in a group. For example, a team developing new computer programs needs members with very specialized technical skills, including the ability to write code, create graphic images, and write instruction manuals. Well-prepared, highly committed,

hard-working groups can come up short simply because they lack members with specific technical skills. “A group of lawyers is not going to do brain surgery, no matter how well they work together.”<sup>14</sup>

In Chapter 3, the situational theory of leadership suggests that there are ideal matches between a leader’s style and the group situation. Likewise, a member’s task responsibilities in the group must be appropriately matched to his or her abilities. In their book *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration*, Bennis and Biederman conclude that one of the hallmarks of a great group is that “the right person has the right job.”<sup>15</sup> When individual abilities and specific group tasks are properly matched, members are better able to make meaningful contributions toward the group’s goal.

## Dealing with Difficulties

What do you do if everyone in your group is an introvert—reluctant to speak up and hesitant to make decisions under pressure? How do you deal with a member who is always aggressive and dominating? These questions are

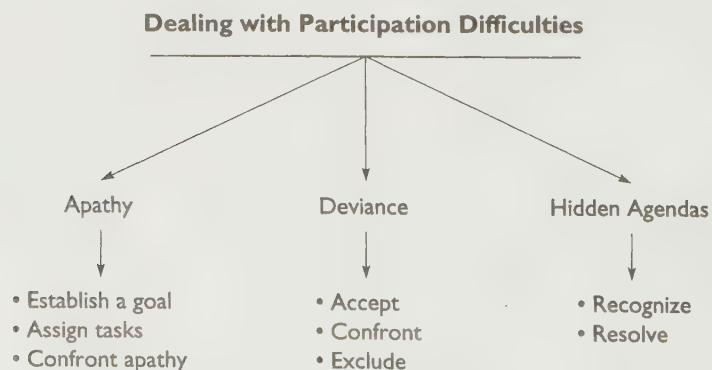
obvious concerns for a conscientious group. In this section, we offer some suggestions that can help you deal with difficulties related to group member behavior.

**Apathy** Overcoming the problem of member apathy is critical to the success of a group. **Apathy** in groups is the indifference that occurs when members do not find the group or its goal important, interesting, or inspiring. Barnlund and Haiman explain the difficulty of dealing with group apathy as follows:

One of the most persistent and difficult of all problems that besets groups is that of apathy. To be sure, discussions often suffer from lack of organization, inadequate information, improper leadership, and interpersonal friction, but few of these seem as difficult to diagnose and remedy as that of disinterest on the part of group members. A committee plagued with apathy is about as efficient in discharging its responsibilities as an automobile engine without spark plugs.<sup>16</sup>

**Causes.** The reasons for a member or a group exhibiting apathy are many. Sometimes people are assigned or forced into groups whose task appears unimportant or whose methods appear to be a waste of time. If a group assignment is not based on a member's interests or abilities, there may be little reason to become highly involved.

Sometimes members become apathetic when their expectations are not met. If your best ideas are blocked or too much time is taken up with the demands of self-centered recognition seekers, it is easy to become turned off. Finally, some members may avoid involvement for reasons related to personality traits or preferences. An introvert may be overwhelmed by extroverts. An intuitive may give up trying to encourage sensing members to



**FIGURE 4.4** Participation Difficulties in Group Communication

focus on the “big picture.” Other members may experience high levels of speaking anxiety and feel more comfortable taking on an apathetic role rather than an active one.

**Cures.** Finding a cure for group or member apathy depends on correctly diagnosing the cause. There are no magic cures for apathy, but there are “treatments” that have the potential to reduce its effects. The key is matching the course of treatment to causes and symptoms of the problem. Treatments include establishing a clear goal, assigning appropriate tasks, and confronting apathy head-on.

Chapter 1 of this textbook emphasizes that the one characteristic most critical to a group’s success is whether it has a clear goal—a thorough understanding of its objectives. One way to decrease apathy is to make sure that everyone in your group understands and shares its common goal. Knowing the purpose of the “sport,” the responsibilities of the “players,” and the “rules of the game” make it much easier and less risky for a participant to join in and “play.” Apathy pushes members to the outfield, into the bleachers, and, eventually, out of the ballpark.

Assigning appropriate tasks to group members is a second strategy that can decrease apathy. Often members are unsure of how to contribute to the group’s goal. Assigning specific responsibilities and tasks to members can increase commitment to and involvement in the group. Apathetic members are not necessarily uninterested or lazy; they may be bored, intimidated, or frustrated. It is important to help them by finding something they are willing and able to do.

Sometimes there is only one way to deal with apathetic members or an apathetic group—confront apathy head-on. Bring it up and talk about it. For example, asking the group why it seems bogged down or arranging a private meeting with an apathetic member can uncover causes and generate solutions.

## *Deviant Members*

Chapter 2 defines deviant members as participants who choose not to conform to the expectations of the group. In some cases, deviant behavior and attitudes can prevent the group from achieving its common goal.

Before confronting deviant behavior, the group should recognize that there are times and occasions when constructive deviance is needed and valuable. Movies, television shows, and books have championed the holdout juror, the stubbornly honest politician, and the principled but disobedient soldier or crew member. Sometimes there is so much pressure for group members to conform that they need a deviant to shake up the process, to provide critical feedback, and to create doubt about what had been a confident but wrong decision. Taking on a temporary role such as blocker or special interest pleader can serve a group well if it prevents discussants from ignoring important information or making a hasty decision.



While most groups can handle the occasional encounter with a deviant member, constant encounters can be disruptive. Fortunately, several strategies can help a group deal with a destructive deviant. A group can accept, confront, or even exclude the troublesome member.

**Accept.** One strategy for dealing with deviants is to accept the deviant behavior. Acceptance is not the same as approval; it involves learning to live with the deviant's behavior. When the deviation is not critical to the group's ultimate success or the deviant's positive contributions far outweigh the inconvenience and annoyance of putting up with the behavior, a group may allow the deviant behavior to continue. For example, a member who is always late for meetings but puts in more than her fair share of work may find her tardy behavior accepted as an unavoidable idiosyncrasy.

**Confront.** Another strategy for dealing with deviants is confrontation. Deviant behavior is impossible to accept or ignore when it threatens the group and its members. When a member becomes "impossible," groups may confront the deviant in several ways. At first, members may direct a lot of attention to the deviant in an attempt to reason with the wayward member. They may even talk about him or her during the course of the discussion. "Other than Barry's objections, I think the rest of us are ready to decide." Although such attention can be intimidating and uncomfortable for the nonconforming member, it may not be sufficient to overcome the problem.

**Exclude.** When all else fails, a group may exclude the deviant. Exclusion can take several forms. During a discussion, a group can turn away from the deviant, ignore her or his comments, or refuse to make eye contact. Exclusion might mean assigning the deviant to an unimportant, solo task or one that will drive the deviant away. Finally, a group may be able to expel the deviant from the group and be rid of the troublemaker. Being asked to leave a group or being barred from participating is a humiliating experience that all but the most stubborn deviants would prefer to avoid.

Finally, there may be value in discussing the problem with the deviant member outside the group setting. Because there are many reasons why a person exhibits deviant behavior, a frank and open interview between the leader or a trusted member and the deviant may uncover causes as well as cures. Some deviant members may not see their behavior as troublesome and, as a result, do not understand why the group is ignoring, confronting, or excluding them. Taking time to talk with a deviant member in a nonthreatening setting can solve both a personal and a group problem.

### *Hidden Agendas*

Most groups have a public agenda. They know what they want and how they intend to go about achieving their goals. The same is true of individuals within a group. Each member may have private goals and preferred methods



**TOOLBOX 4.2** Deviant Behavior in Meetings

Destructive deviation occurs when members resist conformity without regard for the best interests of the group and its goals. During formal meetings, members can deviate from the norm by becoming a nonparticipant or a loudmouth, by interrupting others, by whispering behind members' backs, and by missing important meetings or always showing up late. Methods of dealing with members who present such difficulties in meetings are discussed in **Chapter 13: Planning and Conducting Meetings.**

for achieving those goals. When a member's private goals conflict with the group's goals, there exists what is called a **hidden agenda**. Hidden agendas represent what people really want, rather than what they say they want. When hidden agendas become more important than a group's public agenda or goal, the result can be group frustration and failure. Hidden agendas disrupt the flow of communication. Members with hidden agendas may create diversions in order to achieve their personal goals. Real issues and concerns may be buried while pseudo-issues dominate the discussion. A student reported the following incident in which a hidden agenda disrupted a group's deliberations:

I was on a student government board that decides how college activities funds are distributed to student clubs and intramural teams. About halfway through the process, I became aware that several members were active in intramural sports. By the time I noticed their pro-sports voting pattern, they'd gotten most of what they wanted. You wouldn't believe the bizarre reasons they came up with to cut academic clubs while fully supporting the budgets of athletic teams. What made me mad was that they didn't care about what most students wanted; they only wanted to make sure that their *favorite* teams were funded.

Hidden agendas exist in all groups. The most effective groups deal with hidden agendas by recognizing and trying to resolve them.

**Recognize.** Recognizing the hidden agendas that are present in most groups is a critical first step in dealing with this difficulty. When group members refuse to compromise or if group progress is unusually slow, look for hidden agendas. A question such as "What seems to be hanging us up here?" may encourage discussants to reveal some of their private concerns. Recognizing the existence of hidden agendas may be sufficient to keep a group moving through its public agenda.

Even when you recognize the existence of hidden agendas, some cannot and should not be shared because they may create an atmosphere of distrust.

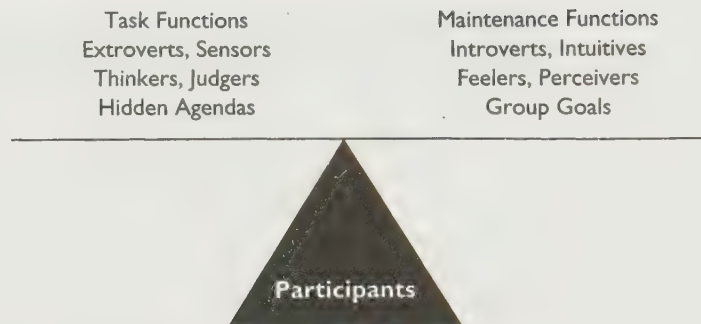


FIGURE 4.5 Participant Balance

Not many people would want to deal with the following revelation during a group discussion: "The reason I'm against these subcommittee assignments is that I don't want to work with Kenneth, who isn't trustworthy or competent." Recognizing hidden agendas means knowing that some of them can and should be confronted, whereas others cannot and should not be shared with the group.

**Resolve.** Groups can resolve some of the problems caused by hidden agendas through early agreement on the group's goal and careful planning of the group's process. Napier and Gershenfeld suggest that discussing hidden agendas during the early planning stages can counteract their blocking power.<sup>17</sup> Initial discussion could include some of the following questions:

- What are the group's public goals?
- Does the leader have any personal concerns or goals?
- Do participants have any personal concerns or goals?
- What outcomes do participants expect?

Discussing these questions openly can be productive if a group recognizes and respects the inevitability and function of hidden agendas. Hidden agendas do not necessarily cause problems or prevent a group from achieving its goal. Understanding them can help explain why members are or are not ready, willing, and able to participate in a group discussion.

## *B*alanced Participation

Participants, just like leaders, have to perform difficult balancing acts in a group. Unlike the tightrope-walking leader whose balancing act is a solo performance, group members are part of a flying trapeze team in which every-

one depends on everyone else. Effective group discussion participants balance their own needs and interests with those of the group. Members should understand which functional roles they are likely to assume within a group and whether there is an imbalance in roles. Members should also analyze their personality traits as well as those of others to determine whether there is a difference in the way members see, understand, and make decisions about the world around them.

Balanced participation is not dependent on a standard set of functions or behaviors within a group. Instead, it depends on everyone's readiness, willingness, and ability to analyze a situation, select strategies that maximize group performance, and then contribute to the group's goal.

## Summary Study Guide

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- Functional theory assumes that all group members can help a group achieve its goal by performing certain task and maintenance functions.
- Group task roles include those of initiator, information seeker, information giver, opinion seeker, opinion giver, clarifier-summarizer, evaluator-critic, energizer, procedural technician, and recorder-secretary.
- Group maintenance roles include those of encourager-supporter, harmonizer, compromiser, tension releaser, gatekeeper, observer-interpret, and follower.
- Self-centered roles include those of aggressor, blocker, dominator, recognition seeker, clown, deserter, confessor, and special interest pleader.
- The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® represents a personality type theory that helps explain the ways in which group members see, think, and make decisions about their group, its goals, and the world around them.
- Myers-Briggs divides personalities into four categories with opposite preferences in each category: extrovert or introvert, sensor or intuitive, thinker or feeler, and judger or perceiver.
- Effective participants must be ready, willing, and able to contribute to a group's goal.
- Although there are many causes of individual and group apathy, groups can lessen apathy's effects by establishing clear goals, assigning appropriate tasks, and confronting apathy head-on.
- Although there are occasions when a deviant member is needed and valuable, groups can use several strategies to deal with deviants including accepting, confronting, or excluding such members.
- Hidden agendas occur when a member's hidden goals and methods conflict with the group's goals and methods. Groups can lessen the effects of hidden agendas by recognizing and, if possible, resolving conflicting motives and goals within a group.

## Groupwork *Type Talk in Groups*

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**GOAL** To understand how Myers-Briggs type preferences impact group perceptions and interaction.

**PARTICIPANTS** Groups of 4 or 5 members.

### PROCEDURE

1. Using the chapter and the descriptive words listed in the following table, group members should select the four types that best describe their own preferences and personality types.
2. Group members should also determine which types best describe the personalities of other group members.
3. Upon completing this step, all members should share their perceptions with the rest of the group, including their own four preferences.
4. Discuss the extent to which member perceptions match one another.
  - To what extent and why is there agreement or disagreement?
  - Is the group missing any of the types?
  - How could the absence of one or more types affect group interaction and productivity?

### *Types of Preferences*

**Extrovert.** Is outgoing; speaks then thinks; is sociable; likes groups

**Introvert.** Is private; thinks then speaks; is reflective; prefers to work alone

**Sensor.** Focuses on details; is factual, practical, and realistic; likes facts

**Intuitive.** Focuses on the big picture; is theoretical; gets bored with facts/details

**Thinker.** Is task-oriented, objective, firm, analytical, and detached

**Feeler.** Is people-oriented, subjective, humane, appreciative, and involved

**Judger.** Is well-organized, structured, in control, and definite; likes deadlines

**Perceiver.** Is flexible, goes-with-the-flow; dislikes deadlines; is spontaneous

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## Participation Assessment Instrument

**Directions** Use the following items to evaluate the quantity and quality of participation by the individual members of your group. Write a summary assessment in the space provided at the end of the instrument.

1. Contribution to the group's *task functions*. (Provides or asks for information and opinions, initiates discussion, clarifies, summarizes, evaluates, energizes, etc.)

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent		Average		Poor

2. Contribution to the group's *maintenance functions*. (Serves as encourager, harmonizer, compromiser, tension releaser, gatekeeper, standard monitor, observer, follower, etc.)

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent		Average		Poor

3. Contribution to effective and efficient *group process*. (Avoids self-centered roles, follows the agenda, respects and adapts to member traits and differences, etc.)

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent		Average		Poor

4. *Readiness* to contribute. (Being prepared)

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent		Average		Poor

5. *Willingness* to contribute. (Level of commitment to group's goal; willingness to share, listen, adapt, exercise responsibility, etc.)

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent		Average		Poor

6. *Ability* to contribute. (Communication skills and technical skills)

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent		Average		Poor

7. Ability to deal with *difficulties*. (Apathy, deviant members, hidden agendas, etc.)

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent		Average		Poor

8. *Overall Effectiveness*.

5	4	3	2	1
Excellent		Average		Poor

(continued)

**(Participation Assessment Instrument, *continued*)***Summary Comments****Recommended Readings***

- Kroeger, O. with Thuesen, J. M. (1992). *Type talk at work*. New York: Dell.
- Larson, C. E. & LaFasto, F. M. J. (1989). *TeamWork: What must go right/What can go wrong*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Levasseur, R. E. (1994). *Breakthrough business meetings: Shared leadership in action*. Holbrook, MA: Bob Adams.

***Notes***

1. Wills, G. (1994). *Certain trumpets: The call of leaders*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 13.
2. Bennis, W. & Biederman, P. W. (1997) *Organizing genius: The secrets of creative collaboration*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, p. 5.
3. Wills, p. 13.
4. Benne, K. D. & Sheats, P. (1948). Functional roles of group members. *Journal of Social Issues*, 4, pp. 41–49.
5. Myers, I. B. with Myers, P. B. (1990). *Gifts differing: Tenth anniversary edition*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists, p. 1.
6. Levasseur, R. E. (1994). *Breakthrough business meetings: Shared leadership in action*. Holbrook, MA: Bob Adams, p. 79.
7. Jaffe, J. M. (1985). Of different minds. *Association Management*, 37, pp. 120–124.
8. Larson, C. E. & LaFasto, F. M. J. (1989). *TeamWork: What must go right/What can go wrong*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, p. 63.
9. Kroeger, O. & Thuesen, J. M. (1988). *Type talk: Or how to determine your personality type and change your life*. New York: Delacorte.

10. Kroeger & Thuesen, p. 114.
11. Levasseur, pp. 87–88.
12. Billington, J. (1997 January). "The three essentials of an effective team." *Harvard Management Update*, 2, p. 1.
13. Larson & LaFasto, p. 62.
14. Pascarella, P. (1998 April). "Stacked deck." *Across The Board*, 35, p. 48.
15. Bennis and Biederman, p. 210.
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17. Napier, R. W. & Gershenfeld, M. K. (1993). *Groups: Theory and experience* (5th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p. 194.





# **L***istening in Groups*

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## **Speaking and Listening**

### **The Need for Effective Listening**

### **Types of Listening**

Comprehensive Listening

Empathic Listening

Critical Listening

Appreciative Listening

### **Group Roles and Listening**

Task Roles and Listening

Maintenance Roles and Listening

Self-Centered Roles and Listening

Leadership Functions and Listening

### **Group Listening Skills**

Use Your Extra Thought Speed

Apply the Golden Listening Rule

Listening Strategies

### **Taking Notes in Groups**

### **Self-Listening in Groups**

### **Adapting to Different Listeners**

### **Balanced Listening**

## Speaking and Listening

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We cannot overestimate the importance of effective listening in groups as well as the consequences of poor listening. As Michael Nichols has written, "When we're with someone who doesn't listen, we shut down. When we're with someone who's . . . a good listener . . . we perk up and come alive."<sup>1</sup> Would you prefer to work with someone who listens attentively or someone who interrupts you, completes other members' sentences for them, and concentrates on the next thing he or she is going to say? Bonnie Jacobson, author of *If Only You Would Listen*, believes that "the main skill required to build an effective work team is keeping your mouth shut and giving your team members the chance to give you their point of view."<sup>2</sup>

At first, listening may appear to be as easy and natural as breathing. After all, everyone listens. In fact, just the opposite may be closer to the truth. Although most of us can *hear*, we often fail to *listen* to what others have to say. Hearing and listening are not the same. Hearing requires only physical ability; listening, however, requires thinking ability. In some groups, a member who is hearing-impaired may be a better listener than someone who can hear the faintest sound. The International Listening Association defines **listening** as "the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages."<sup>3</sup>

## The Need for Effective Listening

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Listening is our number one communication activity. Although percentages vary from study to study, Figure 6.1 summarizes how most people divide their daily communication time.

One study of college students found that listening occupies more than half of their communicating time.<sup>4</sup> In the corporate world, where it has been estimated that managers spend the equivalent of two out of every five working days in meetings, executives may devote over 60 percent of their workday listening to others.<sup>5</sup>

Communication Activity	Percentages
Listening	40–70%
Speaking	20–35%
Reading	10–20%
Writing	5–15%

FIGURE 6.1 Percent of Time Spent Communicating



EFFECTIVE listening involves appropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors. What nonverbal behaviors do these group members exhibit that suggest they are listening effectively? (Gale Zucker/Stock Boston)

Numerous studies have pointed to the importance of listening in education, law, health care, customer service, journalism, counseling, and business management.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, most of us have had little or no listening instruction. The need for such training was demonstrated in a survey of the five hundred largest U.S. corporations, in which 59 percent of the respondents reported that they provide listening training for their employees.<sup>7</sup>

Listening is more difficult in groups than in almost any other situation. There are multiple

speakers, multiple perspectives, and multiple goals. In groups, you are expected to listen and, at the same time, be able to respond, on the spot, to unexpected news, unusual ideas, and conflicting points of view. Instead of concentrating on what one person says and does, an effective group listener must pay attention to the reactions of everyone in the group. In a group discussion, a short daydream, a side conversation, or thoughts about a personal problem can result in missed information, misinterpreted instructions, and inappropriate reactions. Complicating matters is the fact that the social pressure to listen in groups is not as strong as it would be in a conversation with just one other person. If one group member doesn't listen or respond, others usually will. Thus, group members may be poor listeners because they count on others to listen for them.<sup>8</sup>

On the whole, most of us are not very good listeners. Several studies have reported that immediately after listening to a short talk, most of us cannot accurately report 50 percent of what was said. Without training, we listen at only 25 percent efficiency.<sup>9</sup> And, of that 25 percent, most of what we remember is a distorted or inaccurate recollection.<sup>10</sup>

The vast majority of your time in groups will be spent listening. Even during a simple half-hour meeting of five people, it is unlikely that any member will talk more than a total of ten minutes—unless that person wants to be accused of monopolizing the discussion. Unfortunately, many of us place more emphasis on the roles and responsibilities of group members who talk rather than those who listen. Kelly has claimed that “this unbalanced emphasis, especially as it actually affects persons in real discussions, could be an important cause of the problems that speaking is supposed to cure. . . .”<sup>11</sup> In other words, if you are only concerned about what you are going to say in a group discussion, you can't give full attention to what is being said by others.

## *Types of Listening*

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Listening is a complex behavior. Researchers have identified several types of listening, each requiring the ability to hear and see reactions, but different enough to call upon unique listening skills. Within groups, the most important types of listening are comprehensive, empathic, critical, and appreciative listening.

### *Comprehensive Listening*

Comprehensive listening in a group discussion requires an answer to the following question: What do group members mean? **Comprehensive listening** focuses on accurately understanding the meaning of group members' spoken and nonverbal messages.

Two basic steps are involved in this fundamental type of listening. The first is making sure you accurately hear what a member is saying while paying attention to nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, gestures, posture, and vocal quality. The second step in comprehensive listening is making sure that a group member's meaning and your interpretation are similar. Make sure you accurately understand what the person means. Can you identify the main ideas as well as the arguments or evidence used to support a conclusion?

Comprehensive listening is such a vital skill that there is little point in mastering other types of listening until you are sure you understand what other group members have said. After all, if you don't understand what a person means, you can't be expected to respond in a reasonable way. For example, an after-class discussion might begin as follows: "Let's have a party on the last day of class," says Geneva. A comprehensive listener may wonder whether Geneva means (1) we should have a party instead of an exam, (2) we should ask the instructor whether we can have a party, or (3) we should have a party after class. Misinterpreting the meaning of Geneva's comment could result in an inappropriate response.

### *Empathic Listening*

Empathic listening in a group discussion requires an answer to the following question: How do group members feel? **Empathic listening** goes beyond understanding what a person means; it focuses on understanding and identifying with a member's situation, feelings, or motives. Can you see the situation through the other member's eyes? Put another way, how would you feel in a similar situation?

By not listening for feelings, you may overlook the most important part of a message. Even if you understand every word a person says, you can still miss the anger, enthusiasm, or frustration in a group member's voice. An empathic listener doesn't have to agree with or feel the same as other group members but does have to try to understand the type and intensity of feelings



that those members are experiencing. For example, the after-class discussion might continue as follows: “A class party would be a waste of time,” exclaims Kim. An empathic listener may wonder whether Kim means (1) she has more important things to do during exam week, (2) she doesn’t think the class or the instructor deserves a party, or (3) she doesn’t want to be obligated to attend such a party.

### *Critical Listening*

Critical listening asks this question: What’s my opinion? **Critical listening** focuses on analyzing and forming appropriate opinions about the content of a message. It requires critical thinking and careful analysis. Once you understand and empathize with group members, you may ask yourself whether you think they are right or wrong, logical or illogical. Good critical listeners understand why they accept or reject another member’s ideas and suggestions.

Russell makes the following proposal: “Suppose we chip in and give Professor Hawkins a gift at the party?” A critical listener might think (1) the instructor could misinterpret the gift, (2) some class members won’t want to make a contribution, or (3) there isn’t enough time to collect money and buy an appropriate gift.

#### **TOOLBOX 6.1** Listening, Argumentation, and Conflict

Effective listening skills are needed in order to judge the validity of an argument and the factors that separate credible sources from biased sources. Effective critical listeners are better equipped to assess the strength and merit of another person’s ideas and opinions. Listening is also one of the most important tools needed to understand and resolve conflict in groups. When emotions are high, it is difficult to listen comprehensively and empathically.

**Chapter 10: Argumentation in Groups** focuses on the principles and techniques needed to analyze and evaluate the arguments made by group members. **Chapter 8: Conflict and Cohesion in Groups** focuses on methods for understanding and resolving different types of conflict in groups.

### *Appreciative Listening*

Appreciative listening answers this question: Do I like or value what another member has said? **Appreciative listening** applies to the way group members think and speak—the way they choose and use words; their ability to inject appropriate humor, argue persuasively, or demonstrate understanding. For example, if a group is struggling with the wording of a recommendation, appreciative listening can help identify the statement that best captures and eloquently expresses the central idea and spirit of the proposal. When we are

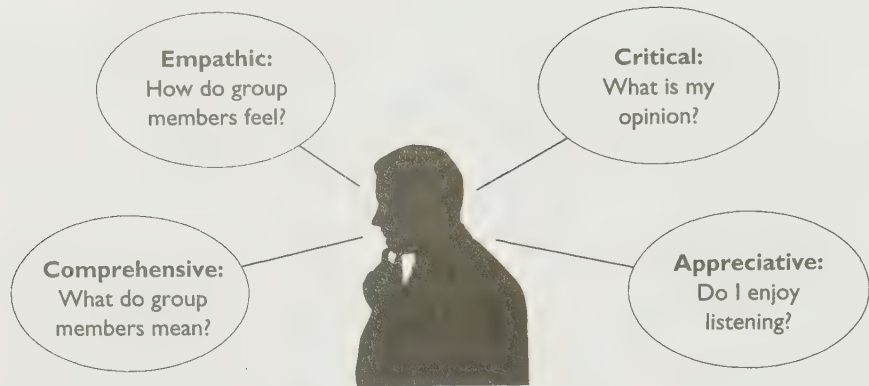


FIGURE 6.2 Types of Listening

pleased to hear a member find the right words to calm a frustrated member or energize an apathetic group, we are listening appreciatively. Appreciative listening skills help us enjoy and acknowledge good talk in groups.

"Well," suggests Paul, "why not buy a thank-you card, ask class members to sign it, and present it to Mr. Hawkins at the party?" An appreciative listener might think (1) Paul always comes up with the best ideas, (2) a well-selected card may be able to express our appreciation better than we could, or (3) I will thank Paul for making a suggestion that doesn't obligate anyone to contribute to or attend the party.

## Group Roles and Listening

No one is a perfect listener. Certainly, it is unreasonable to expect that every group member will be an ideal comprehensive, empathic, critical, and appreciative listener. Fortunately, the group situation provides a way of balancing the strengths and weaknesses of listeners within a group. One way to assess and improve the listening behavior of a group as a whole is to understand the relationship between listening abilities and member roles.

### *Task Roles and Listening*

Members who assume important task roles are often good comprehensive and critical listeners. Elaborator-clarifiers and orienter-summarizers use comprehensive listening to accurately reexplain the ideas of others and summarize group conclusions. Evaluator-critics are usually effective critical listeners who assess ideas and suggestions as well as the validity of arguments. An ef-

**TOOLBOX 6.2** Group Roles

Group members often assume task, maintenance, and self-centered roles. For example, task roles include functions such as initiator, information seeker and giver, opinion seeker and giver, clarifier-summarizer, evaluator-critic, energizer, procedural technician, and recorder-secretary. Maintenance roles include encourager, supporter, harmonizer, compromiser, tension releaser, gatekeeper, observer-interpreter, and follower. Self-centered roles are exemplified by the aggressor, blocker, recognition seeker, clown, deserter, confessor, and special interest pleader. **Chapter 4: Participation in Groups** describes and provides examples of all three types of group roles.

fective recorder-secretary, however, must be a comprehensive rather than a critical listener when taking minutes. If several group members effectively assume most of the traditional task roles, the group, as a whole, is likely to be good at comprehensive and critical listening.

### *Maintenance Roles and Listening*

Maintenance roles affect how well a group gets along. They focus on building relationships and maintaining a friendly atmosphere. Members who assume important maintenance roles are often good empathic and appreciative listeners. Encourager-supporters and observer-interpreters use comprehensive, empathic, and appreciative listening to explain how others feel as well as what others are trying to say. Harmonizers and tension releasers are often empathic listeners who understand when and how to resolve conflicts, mediate differences, and relax the group. If several group members effectively assume most maintenance roles, the group, as a whole, is likely to be good at empathic and appreciative listening.

### *Self-Centered Roles and Listening*

Self-centered roles occur when members put their own needs ahead of the group's goal and other members' needs. Members who assume self-centered roles may be excellent or poor listeners. Aggressors and dominators may be critical listeners who eagerly expose the weaknesses in members' comments in order to get their own way. Blockers may be good listeners who purposely ignore what they hear or poor listeners who are incapable of comprehending or appreciating the comments of others. The recognition seeker, confessor, and special interest pleader may be so preoccupied with their own needs, they are unable to listen to anyone else in the group.

### *Leadership Functions and Listening*

Good leaders are good listeners. They know when to use comprehensive, empathic, critical, or appreciative listening. Effective leaders are also proactive listeners. They don't wait to clear up misunderstandings; they try to make sure that every group member comprehends what is being said. They don't wait for misunderstandings to escalate into arguments; they intervene at the slightest hint of hostility.

The proactive leader tries to find out what members think and feel by asking them, rather than guessing what is on their minds. Leaders who are good listeners do not fake attention, pretend to comprehend, or ignore members. Instead, they work as hard as they can to better understand what members are saying and how those comments affect the group and its goals. In studying the characteristics of effective groups and their leaders, Larson and LaFasto share the comments of a successful aerospace leader: "The worst failing is a team leader who's a nonlistener. A guy who doesn't listen to his people—and that doesn't mean listening to them and doing whatever the hell he wants to do—can make a lot of mistakes."<sup>12</sup>

## **G**roup Listening Skills

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Two major listening principles balance the need for comprehensive and critical listening with the need for empathic and appreciative listening. The two principles are (1) use your extra thought speed and (2) apply the golden listening rule. Once these principles are understood and employed as overriding listening standards, group members can begin to work on specific listening skills.

### *Use Your Extra Thought Speed*

Most people talk at about 125–150 words per minute. According to Ralph Nichols, there is good evidence that if thought were measured in words per minute, most of us could think at three to four times the rate at which we speak.<sup>13</sup> Thus, we have about four hundred extra words of spare thinking time during every minute a person talks to us.

**Thought speed** is the speed (words per minute) at which most people can think compared to the speed at which they can speak. Ralph Nichols asks the obvious question: "What do we do with our excess thinking time while someone is speaking?"<sup>14</sup> Poor listeners use their extra thought speed to daydream, engage in side conversations, take unnecessary notes, or plan how to confront the speaker. Good listeners use their extra thought speed productively when they

- Identify and summarize main ideas
- Pay extra attention to nonverbal behavior



- Analyze arguments
- Assess the relevance of a speaker's comments.

Effective group members don't waste their extra thought speed—they use it to enhance comprehensive and critical listening.

### *Apply the Golden Listening Rule*

The **golden listening rule** is easy to remember: Listen to others as you would have them listen to you. Unfortunately, this rule can be difficult to follow. It asks you to suspend your own needs in order to listen to someone else's. Michael Nichols counsels, "Let go of what's on your mind long enough to hear what's on the other person's."<sup>15</sup>

Napier and Gershenfeld emphasize how important it is to suspend your own needs when listening to others. They maintain that "a critical factor in any problem-solving group is the willingness and ability of group members to listen. People are so busy selling their own ideas, proving themselves, and reacting to personality rather than words that it is a wonder we hear as much as we do."<sup>16</sup> The principle that protects group members from such selfishness is the golden listening rule.

### *Listening Strategies*

Although using your extra thought speed and applying the golden listening rule are critical listening goals, how to achieve them may not be obvious. The following six strategies can improve your listening ability and help apply the two basic principles of effective listening:

- Overcome distractions.
- Listen for main ideas.
- "Listen" to nonverbal behavior.
- Paraphrase.
- Listen before you leap.
- Help the group listen.

**Overcome Distractions.** Distractions can take many forms in a group discussion.<sup>17</sup> Loud and annoying noises, uncomfortable room temperature and seating, frequent interruptions, or distracting decor and outside activities are environmental distractions. Distractions also can be caused by members, such as someone talking too softly, too rapidly, or too slowly; someone speaking in a monotone or with an unfamiliar accent; or someone's unusual mannerisms or appearance. It is difficult to listen when someone is fidgeting, doodling, tapping a pencil, or openly reading or writing something unrelated to the discussion.

When a distraction is environmental, you are well within your rights to get up and shut the door, open the window, or turn on more lights. When another member's behavior is distracting, you can try to minimize or stop the disruption. If members speak too softly, have side conversations, or use visual

aids that are too small, a conscientious listener will ask a member to speak up, request that side conversations be postponed, or move closer to a visual aid.

**Listen for Main Ideas.** Good listeners can identify a speaker's central idea. They can tell the difference between facts and opinions, between arguments and evidence. Poor listeners tend to listen and only remember isolated facts.

Admittedly, the fault for this problem may rest, in part, with the speaker. If someone is not clear or keeps talking long after the point is made, members may lose track and drift off. Good listeners who sense such problems may interrupt such a speaker and ask "Could you help me out here and try to summarize your point in a couple of sentences?" Such an interruption is not rude when it is the only way to focus the group on important issues. Good listeners try to cut through facts and irrelevant comments in order to identify the most important main ideas.

**"Listen" to Nonverbal Behavior.** Speakers don't always put everything that's important to them into words. Very often you can understand a speaker's meaning by observing nonverbal behavior. A change in vocal tone or volume may be another way of saying "Listen up—this is very important." A person's sustained eye contact may be a way of saying "I'm talking to you!" Facial expressions can reveal whether a thought is painful, joyous, exciting, serious, or boring. Even gestures can be used to express a level of excitement that words cannot convey.

It is, however, easy to misinterpret nonverbal behavior. Effective listeners verbally confirm their interpretation of someone's nonverbal communication. A question as simple as "Do your nods indicate a yes vote?" can make sure that everyone is on the same nonverbal wavelength. If, as nonverbal research indicates, more than half of a speaker's meaning is conveyed nonverbally,<sup>18</sup> we are missing a lot of important information if we fail to "listen" to nonverbal behavior. Even Freud suggested that "he that has eyes to see and ears to

#### TOOLBOX 6.3 Listening and Nonverbal Communication

Correctly interpreting nonverbal responses can tell a listener as much or more than spoken words. At the same time, the nonverbal reactions of listeners (head nods, smiles, frowns, eye contact, and gestures) can affect the quality, quantity, and content of a speaker's message. Even the nonverbal setting of a group discussion can communicate a wealth of meaning about the status, power, and respect given to speakers and listeners. A significant portion of **Chapter 7: Verbal and Nonverbal Communication in Groups** focuses on nonverbal communication in groups.

hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore."<sup>19</sup> No wonder it is difficult for most people to conceal what they mean and feel in a face-to-face group discussion.

**Paraphrase.** **Paraphrasing** is the ability to restate what people say in a way that indicates you have understood what they mean. Paraphrasing is a form of feedback—a listening check that asks, “Am I right—is this what you mean?” Too often we jump to conclusions and incorrectly assume we know what a speaker means and feels.

Paraphrasing is not repeating what a person says; it requires finding new words to describe what you have heard. In addition to this restatement of the speaker’s message, a paraphrase usually includes a request for confirmation. Paraphrasing can be used for many purposes:

To clarify meaning: “When you said you were not going to ask Richard, did you mean you want me to do it?”

To ensure understanding: “I know you said it’s okay with you, but I sense you’re not happy with the group’s decision—am I way off?”

To summarize a discussion: “What everyone seems to be saying is that we don’t think it’s the best time to change this procedure, right?”

Notice that each example represents a restatement and a request for confirmation. The speaker can then confirm listener perceptions. Effective paraphrasing requires us to use our extra thought speed to produce a statement that follows the golden listening rule.

There is an added advantage to paraphrasing group members’ statements. Jacobson has written, “One of the best things about listening, at least when we’re in small groups, is that we can find out how well we’re doing.” Such “reality checks” are most important when dealing with emotional issues. Emotions, writes Jacobson, “tend to make a person less articulate. You’ll hear the sputtering of disjointed words and phrases. So it’s up to you to do even more to make sure you’re getting the person’s real message.”<sup>20</sup> Paraphrasing can help ensure that everyone in the group understands what is said.

**Listen before You Leap.** One of the most often quoted pieces of listening advice to come from Ralph Nichols’ writings is “we must always withhold evaluation until our comprehension is complete.”<sup>21</sup> This phrase counsels listeners to make sure they understand a speaker before responding.

Sometimes when we become angry, friends may tell us to “count to ten” before reacting. The same caution is good advice when we listen. Counting to ten, however, implies more than withholding evaluation until comprehension is complete. You may comprehend a speaker perfectly but be infuriated or offended by what you hear. If an insensitive leader asks that “one of you girls take minutes,” it may take a count to 20 to collect your thoughts before responding in a professional manner to this sexist comment. If a group member



tells an offensive joke, you may have a double reaction—anger at the speaker and disappointment with those who laughed. Listening before you leap gives you time to adjust your reaction in a way that will help rather than disrupt a group discussion.

**Help the Group Listen.** In the most effective groups, members help each other listen. The most effective listeners may become the group's translators—explaining what other group members mean and interpreting participant responses. One way to help a group listen is to do periodic group listening checks that ask for a confirmation of comprehension. By asking "What is everyone's understanding of . . . ?" or "Am I right in saying that all of us agree to . . . ?" you are making sure that everyone is understanding and responding to the same message.

You also can help a group listen when group members disagree or argue. When members' emotions are stirred up, their thoughts may be devoted to responding to the opposition rather than to applying the golden listening rule. You can help a group resolve such conflicts by summarizing different positions in accurate and neutral terms.

Try to keep good listening habits at the forefront of the group's attention. Remind members how important it is for everyone to improve their listening behavior. Such reminders can have powerful consequences. In fact, some experts claim that 50 percent of our potential improvement in listening can come simply from realizing we have poor listening habits and are capable of listening much better.<sup>22</sup> As important as listening is to group success, the realization that everyone can become a better listener is well worth remembering.

## **T***aking Notes in Groups*

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If most of us only listen at 25 percent efficiency, why not take notes during a discussion? Why not write down important ideas and facts? Taking notes makes a great deal of sense but only if it is done with caution and skill.

The inclination to take notes is understandable. After all, that's what we do in a classroom when an instructor lectures. If, however, you are like most listeners, only one-fourth of what is said will end up in your notes. Even if it were possible to copy down every word uttered in a group discussion, your notes would be missing the nonverbal clues that often tell you more about what a person means and feels. And if you spend all of your time taking notes, when will you put aside your pen and participate? Ralph Nichols summarized the dilemma of balancing note-taking and listening when he concluded that "there is some evidence to indicate that the volume of notes taken and their value to the taker are inversely related."<sup>23</sup> Thus, the challenge for a group discussion participant is this: How do I obtain brief, meaningful



records of a group discussion? Several methods can help, depending upon your needs and role in the group.

If a member is assigned to take minutes, you can rely on the official record of the meeting. But here too there are potential problems. What if the secretary is a poor listener? What if you need the notes immediately and can't wait for the official minutes to be distributed and approved? Suppose you need personalized meeting notes that record your assignments and important information? In that case, minutes may not be enough.

Flexibility is the key to taking useful and personalized meeting notes. Good listeners adjust their note-taking system to a group's agenda or impose a note-taking pattern on a disorganized discussion. In some cases, margin notes on an agenda may be sufficient to highlight important information and actions. If you attend a lot of meetings, you may find it useful to use a brief form that records important details and provides space for critical information and action. The form shown in Figure 6.3 is an example of the way in which vital information and actions can be recorded.

<b>Meeting Notes</b>	
Group:	Goal/Topic:
Date and Time:	Place:
Members Attending:	
Members Absent:	
Vital Information	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Decisions Reached	
1.	
2.	
3.	
Personal To-Do List	Date Due
1.	
2.	
3.	
Date/Time/Place of Next Meeting:	

**FIGURE 6.3** Sample Form for Meeting Notes

## Self-Listening in Groups

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As important as it is to listen to other members of your group, it is just as important to listen to yourself. If you can monitor and understand the effects of what you and others say, you can become a more effective group member. Two strategies can enhance your ability to listen to yourself. The first is to translate feedback into useful information about the way you speak and listen, so you can answer questions such as these:

- Do members listen to me, or do I seem to be talking to a blank wall?
- Do members seem to understand what I am saying, or are there frequent questions or confusion following my remarks?
- Do I feel my voice rising and my heart racing when I address a controversial issue or argumentative member?

Robbins and Finley suggest that when listening to yourself “whatever you have to say needs only to pass the simple test of teamwork: Are you saying something that is germane to the team as a whole—to its objectives, to its overriding vision, to the tasks it has set out for itself? . . . If not, fix your message so that it is direct, relevant, and respectful of others.”<sup>24</sup>

A second way to listen to yourself is to become aware of your internal thought process. This strategy recognizes that, in a group discussion, what you *want* to say may not be what you *should* say. In order to illustrate the usefulness of this strategy, consider the following hypothetical situation:

A human resources consultant has been assigned to work with a well-established committee charged with planning an advanced job training program for a group of employees. Right from the start the committee chairperson and the consultant do not hit it off. The situation has become so bad that the committee is paralyzed. Nothing gets done as everyone spends valuable meeting time watching the chairperson and consultant fight over every issue on the group’s agenda.

If you were a member of this group, what would you say or do to help resolve such a problem? A lot depends on how well you listen to others and to yourself, how efficiently you use your extra thought speed, and how fairly you apply the golden listening rule. The following seven questions may help you assess your internal thought process:

1. *What do I want to say?* “I wish you two would stop acting like babies. We’re sick and tired of your bickering.”
2. *What are the consequences of saying what I want to say?* Both of them will become angry or hurt, and what is left of group morale and cohesiveness could fall apart.

3. *Have I listened comprehensively?* What is each side trying to say? Is the chair saying that the consultant has no right to impose her will on the group? Is the consultant saying that the chair doesn't respect her as an expert?
4. *Have I listened critically?* Is either side right or wrong? Both the chair and the consultant have legitimate complaints, but their arguments are becoming personal rather than substantive.
5. *Have I listened empathically?* How would I feel if someone treated me this way? I'd probably be just as angry.
6. *Have I listened appreciatively?* Do the chair and consultant have positive contributions to make? The chair should be commended for how well he has led our group. The consultant should be thanked for sharing useful resources and helping us understand the scope of our assignment.
7. *So, what should I say?* I should speak on behalf of the group and tell the chair and consultant how much we value both of them but that the group, as a whole, is distressed by the conflict between them. I should ask whether there is something we can do to resolve the problem.

Taking the time to ask a series of listening questions can help you develop an appropriate and useful response. Analyzing your own thought process lets you employ different types of listening to come up with a useful response that can help resolve a group problem.

## Adapting to Different Listeners

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Just as there are differences among members' backgrounds, perceptions, and values, there are differences in the way people listen. Fortunately, a group provides a setting in which different listening abilities and styles can be an asset rather than a liability. If you have difficulty analyzing an argument, there may be someone else in the group who can be relied upon to serve as a critical listener. If you know that several members only pay attention to the words they hear rather than observing the nonverbal behavior that accompanies those words, you may appoint yourself the group's empathic listener.

Listening behavior may also differ between male and female members. Tannen suggests that men are more likely to listen to the content of what is said, whereas women focus on the relationships among speakers.<sup>25</sup> In other words, men tend to focus on comprehensive and critical listening, whereas women are more likely to be empathic and appreciative listeners. If "males tend to hear the facts while females are more aware of the mood of the communication,"<sup>26</sup> a group is fortunate to have both kinds of listeners contributing to the group process.

Differences in personalities also may affect the way members listen. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® predicts that introverts will be better listeners than extroverts, who are more eager to speak. Judgmental members may be highly critical listeners, whereas perceivers take time to comprehend what they hear without leaping to immediate conclusions.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to gender and personality type distinctions, cultural differences can influence the ways in which group members listen and respond to each other. One study concludes that international students perceive U.S. students to be less willing and less patient as listeners than they perceive listeners in African, Asian, South American, or European cultures.<sup>28</sup> One way to explain such differences in perceived listening behavior is offered by Lustig and Koester, who explain that English is a speaker-responsible language in which the speaker structures the message and relies primarily upon words to provide meaning. In Japanese, however, which is a listener-responsible language, speakers indirectly indicate what they want the listener to know. The listener must rely on nonverbal communication and an understanding of the relationship between the speaker and listener to interpret meaning.<sup>29</sup> Thus, an English-speaking listener may feel as though a Japanese speaker is leaving out important information; the Japanese listener, however, may think that the English speaker is overexplaining or talking down to him or her. Such misunderstanding and perceived discourtesy are the result of speaking and listening differences rather than of substantive disagreement. Adapting your listening style to diverse group members can be a complicated and challenging task when gender, personality types, and cultural differences are taken into account.

## Balanced Listening

Groups lose their balance when too many members want to talk rather than listen. If members fail to listen comprehensively, critically, empathically, and appreciatively, a group will soon lose its ability to work together. In a well-balanced group, members spend more time listening than speaking; they try to balance their own needs with those of listeners. In fact, there may be no more difficult task in a group discussion than suspending your own needs and desire to talk in order to listen to what someone else has to say. In 1961, Ralph Nichols contrasted the hard work of listening with faked attention:

Listening is hard work. It is characterized by faster heart action, quicker circulation of the blood, a small rise in bodily temperature. The over-relaxed listener is merely appearing to tune-in and then feeling conscience-free to pursue any of a thousand mental tangents. . . . For selfish reasons alone, one of the best investments we can make is to give each speaker our conscious attention.<sup>30</sup>



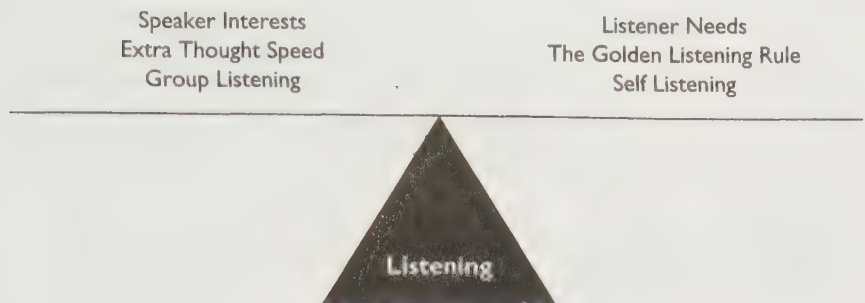


FIGURE 6.4 Listening

Balancing our own interests with an interest in others is the key to listening. A generation after Ralph Nichols drew that conclusion, Michael Nichols repeated his call when he wrote that “perhaps if we started listening to one another we could move toward greater balance in ourselves and in our relationships.”<sup>31</sup>

## Summary Study Guide

- Effective listening in groups requires understanding and reacting appropriately to what you hear and see in a group discussion.
- Listening is our number one communication activity.
- Most people cannot accurately report 50 percent of what they hear after listening to a short talk; without training, most people listen at just 25 percent efficiency.
- There are four important types of listening essential for effective small group communication—comprehensive, critical, empathic, and appreciative listening.
- Members who excel in task and maintenance roles are often skilled comprehensive, critical, empathic, and/or appreciative listeners. Members who assume self-centered roles may be either poor listeners or excellent listeners who take advantage of member weaknesses.
- Two major listening principles are (1) use your extra thought speed and (2) apply the golden listening rule.
- The following six strategies can improve listening within a group discussion: (1) overcome distractions, (2) listen for main ideas, (3) “listen” to nonverbal behavior, (4) paraphrase, (5) listen before you leap, and (6) help the group listen.
- Taking brief, meaningful notes during meetings can improve your ability to follow and remember what was said.

- Self-listening helps you monitor and understand the effects of what you say during a group discussion.
- Differences in listening skills, gender, personality types, and culture can affect and enhance a group's ability to listen.

## Groupwork *Listening Triads*

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**GOAL** To give group members an opportunity to understand their listening strengths and weaknesses.

**PARTICIPANTS** Groups of three members.

### PROCEDURE

1. Before beginning the exercise, all group members should complete the *Group Listening* assessment instrument included in this chapter.
  2. There are three rounds in the Listening Triads exercise. Each round includes three tasks:
    - The **speaker** selects and explains two or three items from the instrument that best describe his or her listening strengths and/or weaknesses.
    - The **listener** listens and may ask questions to help the speaker explain why certain skills are strengths or weaknesses. The **listener** summarizes the speaker's main ideas.
    - The **observer** observes the listener and provides feedback about the listener's listening behavior and summary.
  3. Triads have five minutes for each round of listening. After each round is completed, the group should discuss the listening behavior of the **listener**.
  4. At the end of three rounds, the group should discuss what they learned or observed from the exercise.
    - What general observations can we make about our listening behavior?
    - How easy or difficult was the exercise for the listener?
    - How can we improve our listening behavior?
-

## Group Listening

*Directions* Respond to each of the following assessment criteria and questions by describing your listening behavior and the listening behavior of a group in which you are an active member.

### 1. Types of Listening

Use the letters of the following answers to fill in the blanks in this section.

- A. Comprehensive Listening
- B. Critical Listening
- C. Empathic Listening
- D. Appreciative Listening

\_\_\_\_\_ My listening strength(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ My listening weakness(es)

\_\_\_\_\_ My group's listening strength(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ My group's listening weakness(es)

Are you or your group missing one or more types of listening?

### 2. Listening Principles

Use the letters of the following answers to fill in the blanks in this section.

- A. Use extra thought speed to advantage
- B. Apply the golden listening rule

\_\_\_\_\_ My listening strength(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ My listening weakness(es)

\_\_\_\_\_ My group's listening strength(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ My group's listening weakness(es)

Are you or your group not applying one or both of these principles?

### 3. Listening Strategies

Use the letters of the following answers to fill in the blanks in this section.

- A. Overcome Distractions
- B. Listen for Main Ideas
- C. "Listen" to Nonverbal Behavior
- D. Paraphrase
- E. Listen Before You Leap
- F. Help the Group Listen

\_\_\_\_\_ My listening strength(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ My listening weakness(es)

(continued)

**(Group Listening, *continued*)**

\_\_\_\_\_ My group's listening strength(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ My group's listening weakness(es)

Are you or your group not employing one or more of these strategies?

**4. Self-Listening**

Use the letters of the following answers to fill in the blanks in this section.

A. Translate Feedback

B. Monitor Your Internal Thought Process

\_\_\_\_\_ My listening strength(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ My listening weakness(es)

\_\_\_\_\_ My group's listening strength(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ My group's listening weakness(es)

Are you or members of your group not listening to yourselves?

**5. Assessment and Conclusions**

Given your assessment of the preceding listening strategies and skills, list three ways in which you could improve your listening behavior and three ways in which your group could improve its listening.

To improve my own listening behavior, I should . . .

1.

2.

3.

To improve our group's listening behavior, we should . . .

1.

2.

3.

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# **C**onflict and Cohesion in Groups

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**Conflict in Groups**

Substantive Conflict

Procedural Conflict

Affective Conflict

**Constructive and Destructive Conflict****Conflict Styles**

Avoidance

Accommodation

Competition

Compromise

Collaboration

Choosing a Conflict Style

**Approaches to Conflict Management**

The 4Rs Method

Managing Anger

The A-E-I-O-U Model

Negotiation

Mediation

Arbitration

**Group Cohesion**

Enhancing Cohesion

Groupthink

**Adapting to Differences****Balancing Conflict and Cohesion**

## Conflict in Groups

Conflict is unavoidable in an effective group. Rarely do conscientious members work in groups for any length of time without expressing differences and disagreeing. Yet, despite the inevitability of conflict, many of us go out of our way to avoid or suppress it. One of the myths about effective groups is "that they are characterized by chumminess. Many effective teams look more like battlegrounds, it turns out. . . . Teams with vastly competent members embrace conflict as the price of synergy and set good idea against good idea to arrive at the best idea."<sup>1</sup>

The word *conflict* is frequently associated with quarreling, fighting, anger, and hostility. While these elements may be present in a group situation, conflict does not have to involve the expression of negative emotions. We define **conflict** as the disagreement and disharmony that occurs in groups when differences are expressed regarding ideas, methods, and/or members. This definition emphasizes that conflict only occurs when differences are expressed. Hocker and Wilmot are adamant about this point: "It is impossible to have conflict without either verbal or nonverbal communication behavior, or both."<sup>2</sup> When treated as an expression of legitimate differences, conflict "can be used as the spur to find the wider solution, the solution that will meet the mutual interest of the parties involved in it."<sup>3</sup>

The definition also indicates that conflict occurs when group members express differences about ideas, methods, and group members. Putnam has classified these three sources of conflict as substantive, procedural, and affective.<sup>4</sup>

### Substantive Conflict

**Substantive conflict** is disagreement over members' ideas and group issues. For example, when members of a student government council argue whether or not student activities fees should be raised, their conflict is substantive. Such conflict is directly related to working toward the group's goal of serving students' cocurricular needs.

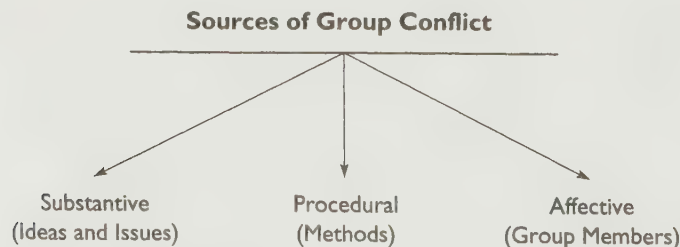


FIGURE 8.1 Sources of Group Conflict



### **Procedural Conflict**

**Procedural conflict** is disagreement among group members about the methods or process the group should follow in its attempt to accomplish a goal. Whereas some group members may want to begin a discussion by suggesting solutions to a problem, others may want to start by gathering and discussing information. Some members may believe that a decision should be made by secret ballot, while others may want a show of hands.

### **Affective Conflict**

**Affective conflict** centers around the personalities, communication styles, and emotions of group members. Its causes are numerous. Affective conflict may occur when a member does not feel valued or is threatened by the group. Affective conflict also occurs when members believe that their ideas are not judged fairly or when group members are struggling for power. Affective conflict is more difficult to resolve because it involves people's feelings and the way members relate to one another.

Frequently when disagreement occurs in groups, both substantive and affective types of conflict are present. For example, Dee believes student fees should be raised in order to fund more campus activities. Charles disagrees and suggests that the existing funds should be used more efficiently rather than placing a larger financial burden on students. At this point in the discussion, the conflict is substantive; it is focused on issues. However, when responding to Dee, Charles rolls his eyes and states that "only a political fool believes that higher fees are the answer to the problem." Not only does Dee disagree with Charles on the issues, but she is also angered by his comment. Now the conflict is not just substantive; it has become affective as well.

## **C**onstructive and Destructive Conflict

Conflict itself is neither good nor bad. However, the way in which a group deals with conflict can be constructive or destructive. Katzenbach and Smith observe the following:

Seldom do we see a group of individuals forge their unique experiences, perspectives, values, and expectations into a *common* purpose . . . without encountering significant conflict. And the most challenging risks associated with conflict relate to making it constructive for the team instead of simply enduring it.<sup>5</sup>

**Destructive conflict** results when groups engage in behaviors that create hostility and prevent achievement of the group's goal. The consequences of destructive group conflict are significant. The quality of group decision making deteriorates when members are inflexible, avoid conflict, or are not open

Constructive Conflict	Destructive Conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on Issues</li> <li>• Respect for Others</li> <li>• Supportiveness</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Cooperation</li> <li>• Commitment to Conflict Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Attacks</li> <li>• Insults</li> <li>• Defensiveness</li> <li>• Inflexibility</li> <li>• Competition</li> <li>• Avoidance of Conflict</li> </ul>

FIGURE 8.2 Constructive and Destructive Conflict

to other points of view. Destructive conflict has the potential to permanently disable a group.

**Constructive conflict** results when group members express disagreement in a way that values everyone's contributions and promotes the group's goal. The table shown in Figure 8.2 characterizes the differences between destructive and constructive conflict. Constructive group conflict has many positive outcomes. Issues and people are better understood through an open exchange. The quality of decision making improves as opposing viewpoints and concerns are discussed. Expressing differences constructively can make a group discussion more interesting and promote participation.

## Conflict Styles

There are many ways of identifying and classifying different styles of conflict. One of the most preferred methods suggests that individuals are predisposed to using one of the following five conflict styles: avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration.<sup>6</sup> These five styles can be further understood by examining the extent to which a group member's approach to conflict is focused on achieving personal goals and/or the group's goal. Members who are motivated to achieve their own goals tend to choose more competitive approaches. Cooperative members are usually more concerned with achieving the group's goals. Figure 8.3 illustrates the relationship of each conflict style to a group member's motivation.

**Avoidance** When members are unable or unwilling to accomplish their own goals or contribute to achieving the group's goal, they may adopt the **avoidance conflict style**. Group members using this style may change the subject, avoid bringing up a controversial issue, and even deny that a conflict exists. Avoid-

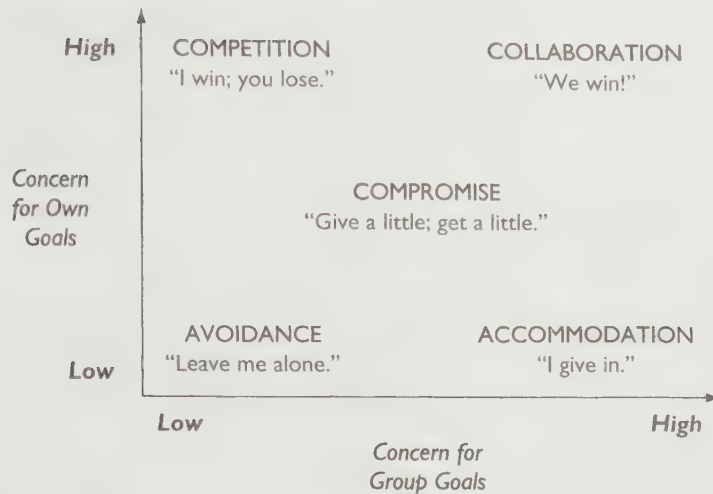


FIGURE 8.3 Conflict Styles

ing conflict in groups is usually counterproductive because it fails to address a problem and can increase group tensions. Furthermore, ignoring or avoiding conflict does not make it go away.

However, in some circumstances, avoidance of conflict can be an effective approach, specifically when

- the issue is not that important to you.
- you need to take time to collect your thoughts or control your emotions.
- other group members are effectively addressing the same concerns.

### *Accommodation*

Group members using the **accommodating conflict style** give in to other members at the expense of their own goals. A genuine desire to get along with other group members is often the motivation of accommodators. Such members believe that giving in to others serves the needs of the group even when the group could benefit from further discussion. A group member who always approaches conflict by accommodating others may ultimately be perceived as less powerful and have less influence in group decision making.

Accommodating during conflict can be an appropriate approach when

- the issue is very important to others but not very important to you.
- it is more important to preserve group harmony than to resolve the current issue.
- you realize you are wrong or have changed your mind.
- you are unlikely to succeed in persuading the group to adopt your position.

**Competition** The **competitive conflict style** occurs when group members are more concerned with their own goals rather than with meeting the needs of the group. Competitive members want to win; they argue that their ideas are superior to the alternatives suggested by others. When used inappropriately, the competitive style may be characterized by hostility, ridicule, and personal attacks against group members. Approaching conflict competitively tends to reduce group members to winners and losers. Ultimately, this may damage the relationships among group members.

In certain group situations, however, the competitive approach may be the most appropriate style. Approach conflict competitively when

- you have strong beliefs about an important issue.
- the group must act immediately on an urgent issue or emergency situation.
- the consequences of the group's decision may be very serious or harmful.
- you believe the group may be acting unethically or illegally.

**Compromise** The **compromising conflict style** is a “middle ground” approach that involves conceding some goals in order to achieve others. When group members compromise, each member is willing to suffer some losses in exchange for gaining something else. Group members who approach conflict through compromise argue that it is a fair method of resolving problems since everyone loses equally. However, groups that begin compromising before attempting other methods of conflict resolution often fail to think of more creative, synergistic options for solving a problem. Steven Covey summarizes this point by drawing a distinction between compromise and synergy. “Compromise,” he observes, “is the proposition that  $1 + 1 = 1.5$ . Synergy is the proposition that  $1 + 1 = 3$ .”<sup>7</sup>

The compromise approach should be used when the group has been unable to find a more constructive solution. Groups should consider compromising when

- other methods of resolving the conflict will not be effective.
- the members have reached an impasse and are no longer progressing toward a reasonable solution.
- the group does not have enough time to explore more creative solutions.

**Collaboration** The **collaborative conflict style** searches for new solutions that will achieve both the individual goals of group members and the goals of the group. Instead of arguing over whose solutions are superior, the collaborative group





IN many group situations—like this rope-pulling contest—a competitive conflict style is appropriate. When is competition not appropriate for resolving group conflict? (© Jean-Claude Lejeune/Stock Boston)

### Choosing a Conflict Style

accommodators can prevent a group from engaging in true collaboration.

Groups should approach conflict resolution collaboratively when

- they want to find a solution that will satisfy all group members.
- new and creative ideas are needed.
- a commitment to the final decision is needed from each group member.
- the group has enough time to commit to creative problem solving.

looks for new and creative solutions that satisfy everyone in the group. Collaboration focuses on problem solving through a team effort rather than arguing over whose ideas are better. Collaboration seeks synergy.

There are, however, two important drawbacks to the collaborative approach. First, collaboration requires a lot of the group's time and energy. Some issues may not be important enough to justify such creative effort and extra time. Second, in order for collaboration to be successful, all group members must fully participate. Avoiders and

While individuals may be predisposed to a particular style, effective group members choose the conflict style that is most appropriate for a particular group in a particular situation. As situations change, so may the group's conflict style. For instance, a member may initially avoid the conflict, then compete to have a particular idea accepted, and ultimately engage in collaboration to seek a creative solution.

Folger, Poole, and Stutman suggest that when selecting a conflict style, you should consider the following questions:

- How important is the issue to you?
- How important is the issue to other members?
- How important is it to maintain positive relationships within the group?
- How much time does the group have to address the issue?
- How fully do group members trust each other?<sup>8</sup>

Answers to these questions can suggest whether a particular conflict style is appropriate or inappropriate in a particular situation. For instance, if group members are not trusting of one another, the compromising style would be less appropriate. If the issue is very important and the group has plenty of

time to discuss it, collaboration should be explored. There is no single conflict style that will be effective in all group situations. The skilled member balances a variety of considerations and chooses an appropriate style.

## *Approaches to Conflict Management*

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Groups can choose from a variety of conflict management methods. Careful analysis of the conflict should determine which approach best suits the situation and the group. Effective group members are flexible and able to use a variety of approaches to resolving conflict. The methods described in this section range from individual approaches to the intervention of a third-party mediator.

### *The 4Rs Method*

In order to choose the most appropriate conflict management method, you should make sure you understand your group's conflict. We suggest using the 4Rs method for analyzing the conflict in a particular situation. The four steps of the method are accompanied by these relevant questions:

- **Reasons.** What are the reasons for or causes of the conflict? Are the causes associated with expressed differences about issues, methods, and/or members? Do other concerned members agree with your assessment of the reasons for conflict?
- **Reactions.** How are group members reacting to one another? Are the reactions constructive or destructive in nature? Can member reactions be modified into more constructive behavior?
- **Results.** What are the consequences of the group's current approach to the conflict? Is the conflict serious enough to jeopardize the group's goal and member morale?
- **Resolution.** What are the available methods for resolving the conflict? Which method best matches the nature of the group and its conflict?

Analyzing the group's conflict before taking action will result in a better resolution because it is based on an understanding of the nature of the disagreement. The 4Rs method provides a way of thinking about conflict and selecting an appropriate approach to conflict management.

### *Managing Anger*

During the course of a conflict, members may become angry because their needs are not being met or because they believe they are being treated unfairly. The way in which group members express anger can determine whether conflict is destructive or constructive. Whereas unrestrained expres-

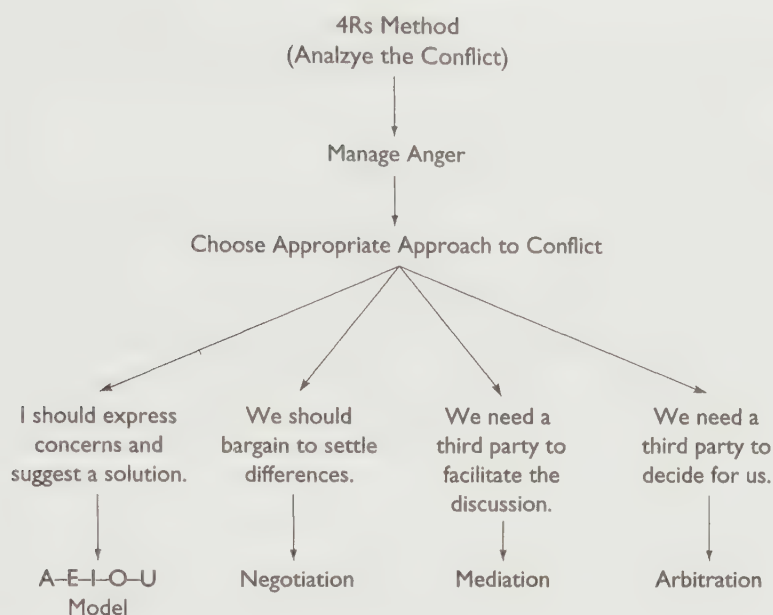


FIGURE 8.4 Approaches to Conflict Management

sions of anger often generate hostility and anger in others, suppressed anger can lead to resentment.<sup>9</sup> The key to dealing with anger is taming it so that it can be harnessed and used to manage and resolve conflict.

If you decide to express your anger, follow these guidelines:

- Determine whether your anger should be expressed to the group at this place and time.
- Make a statement that describes your anger and its source. Be descriptive rather than evaluative, spontaneous rather than strategic, and provisional rather than certain. Use "I" statements to describe your feelings and concerns.
- Allow other group members to express their anger. Apply the golden listening rule: Listen to others as you would have them listen to you.
- Discuss the source of the anger and possible solutions. Focus on issues and try to maintain a supportive group climate.
- Insist upon appropriate expressions of anger and conflict throughout the process. There should be no name calling or accusations.

### *The A-E-I-O-U Model*

In order to resolve conflict, a group must fully understand member concerns. If members do not understand the problem, they cannot effectively find solutions. Wisinski's A-E-I-O-U Model is a way to clearly communicate concerns

and suggest alternative actions.<sup>10</sup> The steps in the A-E-I-O-U Model are as follows:

- A—Assume the other members mean well.
- E—Express your feelings.
- I—Identify what you would like to happen.
- O—Outcomes you expect are made clear.
- U—Understanding on a mutual basis is achieved.

The first step, *A*, requires a belief that other group members are willing to cooperate. Such a belief could be expressed as follows: "I know that all of us want this project to succeed."

The second step, *E*, identifies your feelings associated with a specific behavior or action. "But, I'm really worried because it seems as though we're not putting in the work that's needed." Expressing your feelings and describing behavior helps the group interpret your reaction to the situation.

The third step, *I*, requires that you not only express your concerns but also identify what you want to happen. "I would like to be assured that all of you are as concerned about the success of this project as I am and that you have been thinking about how we can make sure the work gets done on time." The group can now focus its discussion on solving the problem.

The fourth step, *O*, directs you to inform members of the potential outcomes of their behavior. "I sincerely believe that if we don't work late for the next couple of days, we will not be prepared to make an effective group presentation next week."

The final step, *U*, recognizes that your group may need to discuss your suggestions. "Could we try staying late for the next few days to get ahead of the game? What do you think?" A group will frequently reject an initial suggestion but then go on to develop a more satisfactory solution. The final step requires that all group members understand and agree to a solution. When all the steps in the A-E-I-O-U Model are combined, they become the essential ingredients in creating a constructive approach to conflict management.

## Negotiation

**Negotiation** is a process of bargaining in order to settle differences or reach solutions. Normally, negotiation takes the form of compromise, with group members conceding some issues in order to achieve agreement on other points. Group members are more willing to bargain if they believe they will be no worse off and might even be better off by the end of the negotiation process.

Fisher, Ury, and Patton suggest that conflict can be resolved through a process of "principled negotiation."<sup>11</sup> The four principles are as follows:

- Separate the people from the problem.
- Focus on group interests, not positions.
- Generate a variety of possible solutions for mutual gain.
- Insist on objective criteria for choosing a solution.



**TOOLBOX 8.1** Brainstorming and Criteria

Brainstorming is a process for generating as many ideas as possible. In simplified terms, brainstorming can be described as “all input, no put down.” During a brainstorming session, group members are encouraged to generate as many ideas and solutions as possible. Only after the group has spent time generating a wide range of solutions does the group evaluate each idea by using an agreed-upon set of criteria. These criteria should focus on the feasibility and mutual gain to be derived from each solution.

**Chapter 9: Decision Making in Groups** discusses the guidelines for brainstorming and ways to establish decision-making criteria.

Fisher and his colleagues contend that effective negotiation requires “a working relationship where trust, understanding, respect, and friendship are built up over time.”<sup>12</sup> When the focus is on defending positions, the result is winners and losers. By focusing on group interests, the entire group wins. Effective groups brainstorm alternatives and establish criteria with which to evaluate and choose a solution to their problem. Objective and agreed-upon criteria assure that no individual group member has an unfair advantage during negotiation.

The atmosphere is more competitive, partisan, and political in negotiation than it would be if the climate were suitable for collaboration. Wood notes that “because it allows members to pursue personal interests while acknowledging those of others, negotiation constrains communication to respect a delicate balance between individualism and interdependence.”<sup>13</sup>

Clearly, group members must balance a variety of needs during negotiation.<sup>14</sup> They must be willing to cooperate with others while attempting to meet as many of their own needs as possible. They must openly communicate what they are willing to concede yet not sacrifice more than necessary. Finally, members must balance the need to gain their own short-term goals against the benefits of mutually desirable long-term conflict resolution.

## *Mediation*

During the last two decades, a process called mediation has become an alternative tool for resolving disputes. **Mediation** has been described as “facilitated negotiation [that] employs the services of impartial third parties only for the purpose of guiding, coaching, and encouraging the disputants through negotiation to successful resolution and agreement.”<sup>15</sup>

Groups can use the principles and methods of mediation when conflicts have the potential to become barriers to group progress. Mediation is an appropriate approach to conflict resolution when the group members are unable

to resolve the conflict by themselves and when everyone concerned is willing to participate in the process and abide by the final settlement. If group members cannot agree to these terms, then mediation is not an option.

Once a group has decided to use mediation, there are two basic ingredients that must be included: an impartial mediator and a well-planned mediation session.

**The Mediator.** The first step in the mediation process is choosing an impartial mediator who is not involved in the conflict. If a conflict involves all members of the group, a mediator from outside the group should be chosen. The group leader or another group member should be considered as a mediator only if he or she is not involved in the conflict.

The mediator does not take sides in the dispute. Keltner notes that “the mediator makes no decisions for the parties, has no authority to direct or control the action of the parties, and can only work effectively when both parties are willing to use the process.”<sup>16</sup> During the process of conflict resolution, the mediator monitors the honesty and accuracy of the information discussed, helps group members accurately interpret each other’s messages, and allows members to make concessions without appearing weak or defeated.<sup>17</sup>

**The Session.** Based on McKinney, Kimsey, and Fuller’s recommendations on how to lead disputants through a mediation session, the following four-step process can be used to guide a group or its members through mediation.<sup>18</sup>

**Step 1: Introduce the Process.** The mediator creates a supportive climate in which group members can reach an agreement to settle their conflict. The mediator also explains the process and the rules for interaction. Usually, mediators will emphasize that name calling, profanity, or interruptions will not be tolerated.

**Step 2: Define the Conflict.** During this phase, each group member is given time to describe the conflict from her or his perspective. Members are allowed to “tell their story” and share their feelings without interruption or criticism. The mediator will summarize each person’s story and ask for further explanations if they are needed to understand the dispute.

**Step 3: Solve the Problem.** During the third phase, the mediator tries to move members “away from hostile independent attitudes and toward an attitude of cooperative interaction.”<sup>19</sup> The mediator tries to guide group members toward possible solutions. The solving phase is complete “when all issues, all points in dispute, have been discussed and an acceptable resolution is achieved.”<sup>20</sup>

**Step 4: Implement the Agreement.** Upon agreeing to a resolution of the conflict, the group should discuss how the agreement will be implemented. In most mediation sessions, the agreement is put in writing. Details should specify conditions, responsibilities, deadlines, and criteria for judging effectiveness. In some groups, an oral agreement may be sufficient to end the dispute. If an entire group is involved in a mediation session, Tjosvold and van

**TOOLBOX 8.2** Decision Making and Problem Solving

Many of the techniques for group problem solving and decision making can be used to manage conflict and resolve disagreements. For example, brainstorming can be used in a mediation session when disputants are having difficulty finding ways to solve their problem. When group members are reluctant to express differences, the nominal group technique can provide a way in which written suggestions substitute for verbal interaction. By using a detailed standard agenda or parliamentary procedure, groups can focus on substantive conflict while reducing affective and procedural conflict. Chapter 9 describes several decision-making and problem-solving methods. Chapter 15 reviews the principles and rules of parliamentary procedure.

de Vliert recommend that the mediator take time to lead a discussion on ways the group can resolve future conflict.<sup>21</sup>

**Arbitration** Groups often resort to mediation when all other methods of resolving a conflict have failed. If mediation does not work, a group may seek arbitration. **Arbitration**, like mediation, involves a third party. However, after considering all sides, the arbitrator decides how to resolve the conflict. The arbitrator may choose one person's solution or may develop a solution the group has not yet considered. Whatever the final decision, group members are obligated to accept and implement the solution, no matter what they think about the decision.

When turning to an arbitrator to make a decision, group members "have acknowledged that their own decision-making powers are insufficient to resolve the dispute. Their function, therefore, is to present their side of the case as fully and as capably as possible so that fairness and justice can prevail."<sup>22</sup> Despite the hope for a just outcome, professional arbitrators understand that their decisions may not satisfy or please everyone in a group. Yet, for groups that cannot resolve conflicts or solve problems on their own or with the help of a mediator, arbitration may be the only way to make a needed decision.

## Group Cohesion

Resolving conflict in groups does not guarantee success, nor does it ensure that group members will work together in pursuit of a common goal. Working in groups also requires cohesiveness. **Cohesion** is the mutual attraction that holds



the members of a group together. Groups that are cohesive feel committed and unified; members develop a sense of teamwork and pride in the group.

Shaw identifies five characteristics of cohesive groups.<sup>23</sup> First, the more cohesive a group, the more the members interact with one another. Cohesive groups develop supportive communication climates in which members feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and feelings. Second, the interaction in a cohesive group tends to be more friendly and cooperative than in less cohesive groups. Members of a cohesive group make positive statements to others about the group and its members. Third, cohesive groups exert greater influence over members and foster a desire to conform to the group's expectations. In some highly cohesive groups, members may unquestioningly support each other's suggestions. Fourth, cohesive groups achieve their goals more effectively by being more creative and productive in approaching their work. (There is, however, some evidence that extremely cohesive groups may focus too much attention on the social aspects of the group and become less productive.) Fifth, members are more satisfied in cohesive groups. They believe their personal goals and the group's goals are successfully achieved.

### *Enhancing Cohesion*

Cohesive groups are happier and get more work done. Clearly, your group wants to strive for cohesion. Based on Bormann and Bormann, we suggest four general strategies for developing group cohesion.<sup>24</sup>

**Establish a Group Identity and Traditions.** Begin by referring to the group with terms such as "we" and "our" instead of "I" and "my." The language that members use to refer to the group can influence the way they perceive their connection to it. Some groups create more obvious signs of identity such as a group name, logo, or motto. As members continue to work and interact with one another, the group begins to develop its own history. Many groups develop rituals and ceremonies to reinforce traditions.

**Emphasize Teamwork.** The members of cohesive groups believe that their contributions are essential to the success of the group. Group members feel responsibility for and take pride in the work they do as well as the work of other members. They frequently make statements that stress the importance of everyone's role. Rather than the individual members taking personal credit for success, a cohesive group will emphasize the group's accomplishments.

**Recognize and Reward Contributions.** Frequently, group members become so involved in their own work that they neglect to praise others for their contributions. In addition, members are often quick to criticize mistakes and poor work. While constructive criticism is important, members must feel that their efforts are appreciated. Cohesive groups establish a climate in which praise is encouraged. Many groups reward individual efforts and initiative. Celebration dinners, letters of appreciation, certificates, and gifts are all ways in which some groups reward themselves.



**Respect Group Members.** When strong interpersonal relationships are developed in groups, members become more sensitive to each other's needs. Groups that require members to do their part of the work without regard for individual concerns will develop little cohesion. Treating members with respect, showing concern for their personal needs, and appreciating diversity will promote a feeling of acceptance.

### *Groupthink*

**Groupthink** is a term that describes the deterioration of group effectiveness that results from in-group pressure.<sup>25</sup> Highly cohesive groups are at greater risk of succumbing to groupthink. Bennis, Parikh, and Lessem suggest that "perhaps the most damaging disease to a group's health is over-conformity, always the result of group pressure."<sup>26</sup>

**Symptoms of Groupthink.** Irving Janis, a professor at Yale University, developed the theory of groupthink after recognizing patterns in what he termed policy-making fiascos. He suggests that groupthink was a significant factor in several major policy decisions, including the Bay of Pigs invasion, the escalation of both the Korean and Vietnam wars, the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the Watergate burglary and cover-up.<sup>27</sup> After analyzing many of these policy decisions, Janis identified eight symptoms of groupthink. The table shown in Figure 8.5 illustrates the symptoms and expressions of groupthink.

Groupthink Symptoms	Expressions of Groupthink
<b>Invulnerability:</b> Is overly confident; willing to take big risks.	"We're right. We've done this many times, and nothing's gone wrong."
<b>Rationalization:</b> Makes excuses; discounts warnings.	"What does Lewis know? He's been here only three weeks."
<b>Morality:</b> Ignores ethical and moral consequences.	"Sometimes the end justifies the means."
<b>Stereotyping Outsiders:</b> Considers opposition too weak and stupid to make real trouble.	"Let's not worry about the subcommittee—they can't even get their own act together."
<b>Self-Censorship:</b> Doubts his or her own reservations; unwilling to disagree or dissent.	"I guess there's no harm in going along with the group—I'm the only one who disagrees."
<b>Pressure on Dissent:</b> Pressures members to agree.	"Why are you trying to hold this up? You'll ruin the project."
<b>Illusion of Unanimity:</b> Believes everyone agrees.	"Hearing no objections, the motion passes."
<b>Mindguarding:</b> Shields members from adverse information or opposition.	"Rhea wanted to come to this meeting, but I told her that wasn't necessary."

FIGURE 8.5 Groupthink

Moorhead, Ference, and Neck have identified groupthink as a significant cause of the *Challenger* disaster.<sup>28</sup> When NASA officials ignored negative data and critics, refused to seek or listen to outside expert opinion, and failed to examine all alternatives, they became classic victims of groupthink.

**Dealing with Groupthink.** The best way to deal with groupthink is to prevent it from happening in the first place. The following list provides practical ways to minimize the potential of groupthink.<sup>29</sup> Choose the methods that are most appropriate for your group.

- Ask each member to serve in the role of critical evaluator.
- If possible, have more than one group work on the same problem independently.
- Discuss the group's progress with someone outside the group. Report the feedback to the entire group.
- Periodically invite an expert to join your meeting and encourage constructive criticism.
- Discuss the potential negative consequences of any decision or action.
- Follow a formal decision-making procedure that encourages expression of disagreement and evaluation of ideas.
- Ask questions, offer reasons for positions, and demand justifications from others.
- Before finalizing the decision, give members a second chance to express doubts.

In the short term, groupthink decisions are easier. The group finishes early and doesn't have to deal with conflict. However, the decision is often poor and sometimes results in harm. Spending the time and energy to work through differences will result in better decisions without sacrificing group cohesiveness.

## *Adapting to Differences*

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Conflict becomes more complex when group members are diverse; differences in cultural perspectives may result in more disagreements among members. Deutsch points out that cultural differences may result in misunderstandings, prejudices, and unintentionally offensive behavior.<sup>30</sup> A group's failure to effectively manage conflict among culturally diverse members can have serious consequences. Companies that fail to understand, respect, and adapt to differences are likely to have more strikes and lawsuits,

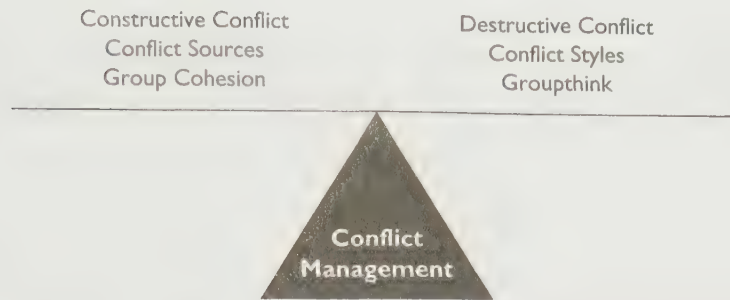


FIGURE 8.6 Conflict Management

low morale among workers, less productivity, and a higher turnover of employees.<sup>31</sup>

The cultural values of individual members will greatly influence the degree to which they are comfortable with conflict and the way conflict is resolved. For instance, U.S. and Japanese cultures differ significantly in their approach to negotiation.<sup>32</sup> Americans tend to approach negotiation as competitive, time pressured, emphasizing knowledge, and seeking contractual agreements. In contrast, the Japanese tend to view negotiation as collaborative, time consuming, based on seniority, and resulting in mutual understanding rather than detailed agreements.

Cultures also differ in their willingness to engage in open conflict. Members from cultures that value conformity are less likely to express disagreement than those from cultures that place a higher value on individualism. Whereas Japanese, German, Mexican, and Brazilian cultures value group conformity, Swedish and French cultures are generally more comfortable expressing differences.<sup>33</sup>

Groups must also be sensitive to how gender differences influence conflict. In general, men tend to approach conflict more competitively. Women tend to search for a collaborative resolution. When engaging in conflict, male group members are more likely to focus on the content of the conflict or substantive issues. Female members are more likely to be concerned with relational issues or affective conflict.<sup>34</sup> Men and women can learn from each other's perspectives as they work through a group's conflict. Finally, it is important to note the gender differences summarized here are only generalizations. Both men and women can and do use both competitive and collaborative approaches to conflict.

Groups that successfully manage conflict with a sensitivity to cultural and gender differences can increase their members' commitment to the group. Bennis, Parikh, and Lessem remind us that "if people's interests were always identical, life would stagnate. Diversity is the most essential feature of life."<sup>35</sup>

## *Balancing Conflict and Cohesion*

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Hocker and Wilmot refer to the management of conflict as “a delicate balancing act, like that of a tightrope walker, or a rock climber who must find just the right handholds or fall to sure death.”<sup>36</sup> The group must balance the need to express differences with the need to achieve group consensus. Individual thought must be encouraged, yet collective group goals need to be achieved.

A group that lacks cohesion is less creative, productive, and satisfied. Extremely cohesive groups, however, risk engaging in groupthink. Yet, fear of groupthink should not discourage efforts to promote cohesion. Groups that are characterized by too much or poorly managed conflict do not develop cohesion. However, groups that place too much emphasis on cohesion while avoiding conflict will often make bad decisions. Groups that engage in constructive conflict are able to successfully balance conflict and cohesion.

## *Summary Study Guide*

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- Conflict occurs when group members express differences about ideas, methods, and/or members.
- The three types of conflict are substantive (focuses on ideas), procedural (focuses on group process), and affective (focuses on personalities, communication styles, and emotions of group members).
- Destructive conflict is characterized by hostility directed toward other group members. Constructive conflict values members and promotes the group's goal.
- The five major conflict management styles are avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration.
- Before reacting, analyze conflict using the 4Rs method—consider the reasons, reactions, and results of conflict along with approaches to resolution.
- When group members feel angry, they should determine whether expressing their anger will help the group achieve its goals.
- The A-E-I-O-U Model of conflict resolution is a technique for expressing your concerns and proposing alternatives in a supportive and constructive manner.
- The steps to principled negotiation include focusing on issues and group interests while generating solutions and establishing objective criteria.
- Groups can use the principles and methods of third-party mediation when conflicts have the potential to become a destructive force and barrier to group progress.



- Cohesive groups are highly interactive and cooperative; they are more likely to achieve their goals and satisfy member needs.
- Groups can promote cohesion by establishing a group identity and tradition, stressing teamwork, recognizing and rewarding contributions, and respecting individual members' needs.
- Groupthink occurs when a group fails to sufficiently evaluate its decisions in order to achieve a consensus. Highly cohesive groups are at greater risk of becoming victims of groupthink.
- Groups can better adapt to cultural and gender differences when engaging in conflict by treating all members equally and focusing on shared goals.

## Groupwork *Win as Much as You Can*

**GOAL** To demonstrate the merit of competitive and cooperative models of conflict styles within the context of small group communication.

**PARTICIPANTS** One or more groups of eight divided into four dyads (two-person subgroups).

### PROCEDURE\*

1. There are ten rounds in this exercise. During each round you and your partner will have to choose an "X" or a "Y." The "payoff" for each round is determined by the choices of all the dyads in your eight-person group.
2. There are three key rules:
  - Do not confer with other members of your group unless you are told to do so.
  - Each dyad must agree upon a single choice for each round.
  - Make sure that other members of your group do not know your dyad's choice until you are told to reveal it.
3. Confer with your partner on every round. Before rounds 5, 8, and 10, you can confer with the other pairs in your group.

### *Payoff Chart*

4	Xs:	Lose	\$1.00 each
3	Xs:	Win	\$1.00 each
1	Ys:	Lose	\$3.00 each
2	Xs:	Win	\$2.00 each
2	Ys:	Lose	\$2.00 each
1	Xs:	Win	\$3.00 each
3	Ys:	Lose	\$1.00 each
4	Ys:	Win	\$1.00 each

\*The textbook's *Instructor's Manual* explains how to conduct this GroupWork exercise.

*Tally Sheet*

Round	Time Allowed	Confer with	Choice	\$ Won	\$ Lost	Balance
1	2 min.	partner				
2	1 min.	partner				
3	1 min.	partner				
4	1 min.	partner				
5*	3 min. +1 min.	group partner				
6	1 min.	partner				
7	1 min.	partner				
8**	3 min. +1 min.	group partner				
9	1 min.	partner				
10***	3 min. +1 min.	group partner				

\*Payoff is multiplied by 3

\*\*Payoff is multiplied by 5

\*\*\*Payoff is multiplied by 10

Source: Based on Gellerman, W. (1970). Win as much as you can. In J. W. Pfeiffer & J. E. Jones (Eds.), *A handbook of structured experiences for human relations training*, Vol. 2. La Jolla, CA: University Associates (1974), pp. 66-69.

## Ross-DeWine Conflict Management Message Style Instrument

**Directions** Below you will find messages which have been delivered by persons in conflict situations. Consider each message separately and decide how closely this message resembles the ones that you have used in conflict settings. The language may not be exactly the same as yours, but consider the messages in terms of similarity to your messages in conflict. There are no right or wrong answers, nor are these messages designed to trick you. Answer in terms of responses you make, not what you think you should say. Give each message a 1–5 rating on the answer sheet provided according to the following scale. Mark one answer only.

In conflict situations, I

1	2	3	4	5
never say things like this	rarely say things like this	sometimes say things like this	often say things like this	usually say things like this

- 1 1. "Can't you see how foolish you're being with that thinking?"
- 2 2. "How can I make you feel happy again?"
- 4 3. "I'm really bothered by some things that are happening here; can we talk about these?"
- 1 4. "I really don't have any more to say on this . . . (silence)."
- 5 5. "What possible solutions can we come up with?"
- 3 6. "I'm really sorry that your feelings are hurt—maybe you're right."
- 5 7. "Let's talk this thing out and see how we can deal with this hassle."
- 1 8. "Shut up! You are wrong! I don't want to hear any more of what you have to say."
- 1 9. "It is your fault if I fail at this, and don't you ever expect any help from me when you're on the spot."
- 2 10. "You can't do (say) that to me—it's either my way or forget it."
- 4 11. "Let's try finding an answer that will give us both some of what we want."
- 3 12. "This is something we have to work out; we're always arguing about it."

(continued)

**(Ross-DeWine Conflict Management Message Style Instrument, continued)**

- 3 13. "Whatever makes you feel happiest is OK by me."  
4 14. "Let's just leave well enough alone."  
2 15. "That's OK . . . it wasn't important anyway. . . . You feeling OK now?"  
3 16. "If you're not going to cooperate, I'll just go to someone who will."  
4 17. "I think we need to try to understand the problem."  
1 18. "You might as well accept my decision; you can't do anything about it anyway."

**Scoring Instructions**

By each item number, list the rating (from 1–5) you gave that item. When you have entered all ratings, add total ratings for each column. Enter the resulting score in the space provided.

<i>SELF Items</i>	<i>ISSUE Items</i>	<i>OTHER Items</i>
1. <u>1</u>	3. <u>4</u>	2. <u>2</u>
8. <u>1</u>	5. <u>5</u>	4. <u>1</u>
9. <u>1</u>	7. <u>5</u>	6. <u>3</u>
10. <u>2</u>	11. <u>4</u>	13. <u>3</u>
16. <u>3</u>	12. <u>3</u>	14. <u>4</u>
18. <u>1</u>	17. <u>4</u>	15. <u>2</u>
Your Total Score <u>9</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>15</u>
Average Score (13.17)	(24.26)	(21.00)

The items comprising the SELF focus deal with one's personal interests in the conflict situation. These messages suggest that one's primary concern is in resolving the conflict so that a person's personal view of the conflict is accepted by the other. This is a "win" approach to conflict resolution.

The items comprising the ISSUE focus deal with an emphasis on both parties dealing with the problem. These message statements suggest an overriding concern with the content of the conflict rather than the personal relationship.

The items comprising the OTHER focus deal with neither the conflict issues nor personal interests, but emphasize maintaining the relationship at a cost of resolving the conflict. These statements suggest that one would rather ignore the problem to maintain a good relationship with the other person.



All of us may use one of these styles in different settings and under different circumstances. People do tend to have a predominant style which is evidenced by the kinds of messages sent during conflict situations. The intent of this instrument is to cause individuals to focus on what they are communicating in the messages they send during conflict and to make sure that what they are saying is what they intended to say.

The averages are an indication of scores one might expect to receive. Scores that are higher or lower than these means indicate a higher or lower use of this message style than would normally be expected.

Source: DeWine, S. (1994). *The consultant's craft: Improving organizational communication*. New York: St. Martin's, pp. 268–272; Ross, R. G. & DeWine, S. (1988). Communication messages in conflict: A message-focused instrument to assess conflict management styles. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 1, pp. 389–413.

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# **M***aking Presentations in Groups*

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## **Presentations in Groups**

### **Oral Presentation Guidelines**

Purpose

People

Place

Preparation

Planning

Personal Credibility

Performance

### **Technology and Presentation Aids**

Restraint

Type

Templates and Graphics

Multimedia

Ethical Considerations

### **Group Presentations**

Public Group Presentations

Team Presentations

### **Questions and Answers**

### **Balanced Oral Presentations**

# Presentations in Groups

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The spontaneous, give-and-take nature of a group discussion enhances a group's ability to share information and solve problems. There are, however, circumstances in which groups may set aside time for less spontaneous and more structured forms of communication. Individual members or a selected spokesperson may be asked or required to make an oral presentation. The following three scenarios illustrate how such presentations become part of the group process:

- *Debating the Tuition Proposal.* The student government association at Fallingstar State College has been asked to discuss the college's proposal to increase tuition by 10 percent. In order to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to speak at the meeting, student representatives are limited to three-minute statements.
- *Opposing the Tuition Proposal.* The student government association selects a spokesperson to make an oral presentation opposing the proposed tuition increase at the monthly meeting of Fallingstar State College's board of trustees.
- *Appealing for State Funding.* The president of Fallingstar State College asks the student government association's spokesperson to be part of a group presentation to the state legislature's appropriations committee in which a team of administrators, faculty, staff, and students will be given forty-five minutes to present a request for increased state funding.

During the course of any group discussion or meeting, an oral presentation may be required by one or more group members. In other situations, a group member may be asked to make an oral presentation to an outside group or audience. In such situations, the reputation and quality of a group may be judged by how well its members succeed as speakers. As Leech put it, re-

## TOOLBOX 11.1 Fear of Speaking

The number one fear of most North Americans is the fear of speaking in front of groups. Regardless of the setting of an oral presentation, there are several guidelines that can help a nervous speaker manage and survive the effects of "stage fright." Included among these guidelines are (1) realize you are not alone; (2) read and talk about it; (3) be well prepared; and (4) learn communication skills. In this chapter, we focus on how to make sure you are well prepared as well as how to practice and deliver an effective oral presentation. **Chapter 5: Confidence in Groups** discusses additional ways of coping with communication apprehension.

ardless of the setting, “a presentation is your opportunity to shine or to blow it. I have seen careers take quantum jumps as a result of good performance in presentations and receive severe setbacks for poor communication.”<sup>1</sup> Whether it is within a group, on behalf of a group, or by an entire group, an **oral presentation** occurs when a member is given the opportunity to speak, uninterrupted, to a group of people.

This chapter offers specific guidelines that can help you prepare and present a successful oral presentation that is adapted to the needs and characteristics of a group and its goals. These guidelines also can be used in the event that you or your group has to make a presentation to an outside audience.

## Oral Presentation Guidelines

Most experienced speakers do not follow a strict set of rules. Instead, they use a set of guidelines to direct them through critical decision-making steps. Based on a model developed by Engleberg, the guidelines shown in Figure 11.1 represent essential decision-making points and questions that should be addressed when developing an oral presentation.<sup>2</sup>

**Purpose** The first and most important step in developing a successful oral presentation is identifying your purpose. Purpose is not the same as topic. Purpose determines what you want your listeners to know, think, believe, or do as a result of your presentation. For example, the discussion topic for the student government association at Fallingstar State College is the proposed tuition increase. A student speaker’s purpose, however, may be to support or oppose

Order	Guideline	Key Question
1	Purpose	What is the goal of your oral presentation?
2	People	How will you adapt to the members of your audience?
3	Place	How will you adapt to the occasion and setting of your presentation?
4	Preparation	What ideas and information should you include?
5	Planning	How will you organize and support your ideas?
6	Personal Credibility	How can you enhance your believability and perceived competence?
7	Performance	How should you practice and deliver your presentation?

FIGURE 11.1 Oral Presentation Guidelines

the increase. In a group discussion, the general topic of an oral presentation is usually predetermined by the group and its agenda. Thus, when a student rises to speak for or against higher tuition, everyone is well aware of the topic but may be unable to predict the speaker's position or arguments. Having a clear purpose does not necessarily mean you will achieve it. Without a purpose, though, little can be accomplished and much can be lost.

## People

If the first and most important guideline in developing an oral presentation is identifying your purpose, the next most important is to analyze and adapt to your listeners—the people who are members of your group or an outside audience. This process begins by finding answers to these two questions: What are their characteristics? What are their opinions?

**Characteristics.** Two characteristics to consider when analyzing a group of listeners are demographic traits and individual attributes. **Demographic**

**traits** include age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and marital status. If you have been working in a group for a long time, it will be easy to catalog the demographic traits of its members. Before a new or large audience, the task is more difficult. Take a good look at your listeners to note visible demographic traits such as age, gender, and race. At the same time, assume that there is more diversity than similarity among audience members.

Within a group, **individual attributes** take into account the distinctive features of group members such as job title and status, special interests, relationships with other members, and length of group membership. Demographic traits and individual attributes can affect how group members react to you and your message. For example, students who support themselves on limited incomes may oppose a tuition increase more strongly than students whose parents pay their tuition and can afford the increase.



EFFECTIVE speakers adapt their presentations to the characteristics of audience members. What might a speaker consider when adapting to this audience? (Bob Daemmerich/The Image Works)

**Opinions.** There can be as many opinions in an audience as there are members. Some members will agree with you before you begin your oral presentation, whereas others will disagree no matter what you say. Some listeners will have no opinion about an issue and be quite willing to accept a reasonable point of view or proposal. Try to predict who or how many listeners will agree, disagree, or be undecided.



If most of your listeners agree with you, are undecided, or have no opinion, your oral presentation should focus on introducing new information or summarizing the most important ideas and arguments. When people share the same opinions and goals, an oral presentation should update listeners who are in need of information and motivate them to work as a united team. For example, if student government members are universally opposed to a tuition increase, a speaker could focus on motivating that audience to take political action.

If audience members disagree with you, make sure that you have set realistic goals. Asking students to storm the president's office may get the administration's attention but may be too radical for most students to support. A second strategy is to work at getting audience members to listen to you. You can't do that by telling them that you're right and they're wrong. You can't change their minds if they won't listen. Instead, try to find **common ground**. Find a belief or value that you share with those who disagree. Emphasizing the ideas, feelings, history, and hopes that people share can help you overcome resistance. For example, if a student speaker tells the board of trustees that the student government wants to help them find a solution to the financial crisis, the board may be more willing to listen to student concerns about the proposed tuition increase. Finally, when you address a controversial issue, make sure you support your arguments with fair and reasonable evidence. If your arguments and evidence are weak, your opponents are likely to use those weaknesses against you.

**Place** Deciding how to adapt to the occasion and setting of an oral presentation requires more than taking a quick look at the seating arrangements for a meeting. Ask questions about *where* and *when* you will be speaking.

**Where?** Where will you deliver your oral presentation—in a large conference room, an auditorium, a classroom? What are the seating arrangements? Are there any distracting sights or sounds? Can the lighting be changed? Will

#### TOOLBOX 11.2 Influencing Group Members

Understanding how to develop and defend an argument is a valuable skill when presenting an oral presentation or answering group questions. By clearly stating the claim of your argument, supporting your claim with evidence, providing valid reasons for your position, and summarizing your conclusion, you are more likely to have your ideas and opinions taken seriously by others. **Chapter 10: Argumentation in Groups** examines the role and uses of argumentation as a means of achieving group and individual goals.

**TOOLBOX 11.3** Information as Supporting Material

Different types of information (facts, testimony, statistics, definitions, descriptions, and examples) can be used as supporting material for an oral presentation. In choosing a specific type of information as supporting material, make sure that it is appropriate for your audience and advances your purpose. For example, whereas facts and statistics can be useful to compare tuition rates at different colleges, testimony and examples of the personal hardships that students will face if tuition is increased can be highly persuasive. **Chapter 12: Informed Groups** focuses on how to search for and select information that can be used as supporting material for an oral presentation.

you need a microphone? Will special equipment be needed for presentation aids? Once you have answered such questions, the next step is figuring out how to adapt to where you will be delivering your presentation. For example, a request for a microphone would be in order if a student government spokesperson learns that several hundred students plan to attend the board of trustees meeting.

**When?** Will you be speaking in the morning or afternoon? Are you scheduled to speak for five minutes, twenty minutes, an hour? What comes before or after your presentation—other presentations, lunch, a question-and-answer session? The answers to questions about timing may require you to make major adjustments to your oral presentation. If you are given a time limit for your presentation, the limit should be respected. Whether you are scheduled for five minutes or one hour, never add more than 5 percent to your allotted time. Even better, aim for 5 percent less. Most people lose patience with someone who speaks too long.

### *Preparation*

As soon as you know you have to make an oral presentation, start collecting ideas and information. Gathering materials can be as simple as spending a few hours thinking about the purpose of your presentation or as complicated and time-consuming as spending days doing research on the Internet and in the library. Regardless of the topic or your purpose, try to research multiple sources and include more than one type of information in your oral presentation.

### *Planning*

Planning a speech requires organizing your ideas and supporting material in a way that will help you achieve your purpose. Ask yourself whether there is a natural structure or framework for your message. What common ideas have appeared in most of your materials? What information seems most interesting, important, and relevant to the purpose of your presentation?

<b>Organizational Pattern</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Reason Giving</b>	Three reasons why we should increase the dues are . . .
<b>Time Arrangement</b>	The college's hiring steps must be complied with in the following order . . .
<b>Space Arrangement</b>	The following membership increases occurred in the east, south, west, and central regions . . .
<b>Problem–Solution</b>	This research method avoids the problems we encountered last time . . .
<b>Causes and Effects</b>	Here's what could happen if we fail to increase our dues . . .
<b>Stories and Examples</b>	I've contacted four community associations in this county and here's what I found . . .
<b>Compare–Contrast</b>	Let's take a look at the two research methods we considered . . .

FIGURE 11.2 Organizational Pattern

**Organizational Patterns.** Fortunately, there are many patterns of organization that can help you put your ideas and information in order. Figure 11.2 summarizes some common patterns.

Regardless of whether you choose one of the patterns shown in the figure or invent a different organizational structure better suited to your needs, you should always focus on your purpose. Consider whether a pattern lends itself to achieving the purpose of your oral presentation. If it does, you can move on to connecting your supporting material to the organizational pattern you have chosen.

**Outlining Your Presentation.** Outlines for an oral presentation start with a few basic building blocks. A simple model outline can be used to organize almost any kind of oral presentation.

- I. Introduction
- II. Central Idea or Purpose  
(Preview of Main Points)
- III. Body of Presentation
  - A. Main Point #1
    - 1. Supporting Material
    - 2. Supporting Material
  - B. Main Point #2
    - 1. Supporting Material
    - 2. Supporting Material
  - C. Main Point #3
    - 1. Supporting Material
    - 2. Supporting Material
- IV. Conclusion

Naturally, every outline will differ depending on the number of main points and the amount and type of supporting material you use. Once you have outlined your presentation, the major sections should be filled in with more specific ideas and supporting material.

The introduction of an oral presentation should be used to gain audience attention and interest. An effective beginning should direct the audience's attention toward you and your message. An interesting example, statistic, quotation, or story at the beginning of a presentation can "warm up" your audience and prepare them for your message.

The "central idea or purpose" section of an oral presentation lets you explain your basic purpose and provides an opportunity to preview the main points of your presentation. This section should be brief, no more than a few sentences. It just reveals your purpose and, in some cases, the organizational plan you will use in the body of the presentation.

The heart of your oral presentation is the "body" section. Here you add your supporting material to each main point. No matter how many main points there are, each should be justified or backed up with at least one type of supporting material. If you can use several different types, your presentation will be more interesting and impressive.

The end of a presentation should have a strong and well-planned conclusion. An effective conclusion can help listeners remember the most important parts of your message. A quick summary, a brief story, a memorable quotation, or a challenge to the group can leave a strong final impression.

Figure 11.3 represents the organizational structure and notes that could be used for a presentation by a student spokesperson to Fallingstar State College's board of trustees.

### *Personal Credibility*

In an oral presentation, your personal credibility depends on how well the audience can identify with you and your message. No matter how much you know about the subject or how sincere you are about your purpose, it is your audience's opinion that determines whether you are perceived as qualified and believable. Hart, Friedrich, and Brooks define a speaker's **personal credibility** as "an audience's perceptions of the speaker (independent of the speaker's intent or purpose) which vary over time and lead the audience to accept or reject the attitude, belief, and/or action the speaker proposes."<sup>3</sup> This guideline may sound simple—improve your credibility and the audience will believe you—but it depends on many factors. Two important factors that have been isolated by researchers are competence and character.

Competence describes whether you know what you are talking about and can effectively communicate that content to your audience.<sup>4</sup> If you are not a recognized expert on a subject, you must demonstrate that you are well prepared. There is nothing wrong with letting your group or audience members know how much time and effort you have put into researching the topic or with sharing your surprise at discovering new ideas and information. In



## SAMPLE PRESENTATION OUTLINE

### Hold the Line on Tuition

#### I. Introduction

*Story: Student who had to choose between buying shoes for her children and paying tuition for her nursing courses.*

#### II. Central Idea or Purpose

*Because a tuition increase will have a devastating effect on many students, we ask you to search for other ways to manage the college's financial crisis.*

#### III. Body of Presentation

A. *Another tuition increase will prevent students from continuing or completing their college education on schedule.*

1. *More students are becoming part-time rather than full-time students. (College statistics)*
2. *Students are taking longer to complete their college degrees. (College statistics)*
3. *Students are sacrificing important needs to pay their tuition bills.  
(Quotations and examples from college newspaper)*

B. *There are better ways to manage the college's financial crisis.*

1. *Consolidate areas and reduce the number of administrators and support staff.  
(Comparison college of same size that has less staff)*
2. *Seek more state and grant funding.  
(Statistics from national publication comparing funding levels and grants at similar types of colleges)*
3. *Re-evaluate cost and need for activities and services such as athletic teams, the off-campus homecoming and scholarship balls, intersession courses, and full staffing during summer sessions. (Examples)*

#### IV. Conclusion

*Money is a terrible thing to waste when students' hearts and minds are at stake. Let's work together to guarantee that all of our students become proud and grateful alumni.*

**FIGURE 11.3** Sample Presentation Outline

both cases, you would be demonstrating that you have worked hard to become a qualified and competent speaker.

Character raises questions about your goodwill and honesty. Are you trustworthy and sincere? Do you put the group's goal above your own? Sprague and Stuart ask a third question: "Do you make a special effort to be fair in presenting evidence, acknowledging limitations of your data and opinions, and conceding those parts of your opponent's case that have validity?"<sup>5</sup> If audiences and group members don't trust you, it won't matter what you say.

## Performance

By the time you start asking questions about delivery, you should know what you want to say and have given some thought to how you want to say it. Zarefsky writes that "*how* you say something affects *what* is really being said, and it certainly affects what is heard and understood. Good delivery will help the audience to listen, understand, remember, and act on the speech."<sup>6</sup>

**Forms of Delivery.** In many group and public audience settings, you will be asked to speak **impromptu**—a form of delivery without advance preparation or practice. For example, a board of trustees member may ask a student spokesperson a question after an oral presentation. The student must respond impromptu. Being well informed and anticipating such requests is the best way to be prepared for impromptu speaking.

When you do have advance notice, you will be more effective if you speak extemporaneously. In **extemporaneous** speaking, you have time to prepare but do not write out and read your presentation word for word. Instead you should use an outline of key words or a brief set of notes for guidance. Try to avoid reading your presentation. Even though it may be well written and well read, such delivery is too formal for many settings. Moreover, reading from a script prevents you from observing listener reactions and modifying your presentation as a result of those reactions.

**Vocal and Physical Delivery.** The key to a successful performance is practice. Waiting until you begin your presentation is much too late to make delivery decisions. Moreover, the only way to accurately predict the length of your presentation is to practice out loud and time it. The place to work on how you sound and look is during rehearsal sessions.

Vocal characteristics such as volume, rate, pitch, articulation, and pronunciation can be controlled and practiced. Rehearse your presentation in a voice loud enough to be heard but without shouting. Even in a small group setting, an oral presentation requires a bit more volume than you would use in a normal conversation. It is also advisable to monitor the rate at which you speak. Many listeners have difficulty following someone who speaks at a rate that exceeds 180 words per minute. The most tolerable and useful all-purpose rate is 140–180 words per minute.<sup>7</sup>

Sometimes speakers are difficult to understand because their articulation is not clear. Poor articulation is often described as sloppy speech or mumbling. Generally, it helps to speak a little slower and a little louder, and to open your mouth a little wider than usual. Similar problems can occur when words are mispronounced. Because it can be embarrassing to mispronounce a word or a person's name, look up the words in a dictionary or ask someone how to pronounce them correctly.

The single most important physical characteristic in an oral presentation is eye contact. Look directly at the individual members of your audience, eye-to-eye. Holcombe and Stein contend that even before a large audience "the only kind of eye contact that successfully establishes the feeling of connection with members of the audience is a reasonably long, in-focus look at specific individuals."<sup>8</sup>

There is more to body movement than thinking about how you sit in a chair or stand before a group. Your gestures, appearance, and actions can add to or detract from your presentation. If you are well prepared and have practiced, your gestures and movements should be natural. At the same time, try to avoid distracting gestures such as pushing up eyeglasses, tapping the table with a pencil, and pulling on a strand of hair. Such annoying movements can draw attention away from the content of your presentation.

**Presentation Aids.** **Presentation aids** are supplementary audio and/or visual materials that help an audience understand and remember what is said in a discussion or oral presentation. Effective presentation aids can make a dull topic interesting, a complex idea understandable, and a long presentation endurable. In fact, "for many people, well-designed visuals are the hallmark of a professional presentation."<sup>9</sup> Studies sponsored by the 3M corporation found that group "presenters who use visual aids are perceived as better prepared, more professional, more highly credible, and more interesting than those who do not."<sup>10</sup> At first, these findings may be difficult to believe. Can something as simple as an overhead transparency make that much difference? The answer is yes.

Presentation aids can take many forms: handouts, posters, flip charts, overhead transparencies, computer-generated slides, and videos. The following list of dos and don'ts can help you avoid some of the common pitfalls that speakers encounter when using presentation aids.

- *Explain the Point.* A presentation aid does not speak for itself. You may need to explain why you have chosen it and what it means.
- *Wait Until It's Time.* Prepare listeners for a presentation aid so they will want to see it. Give them enough time to look at it so that they don't mind turning their attention back to you.
- *Don't Talk to Your Aid.* You control the presentation aid; it shouldn't control you. Talk directly to the people in your audience, not to the poster, flip chart, or slide.

- *Be Prepared to Do Without.* Presentation aids can be lost or damaged; equipment can malfunction. Have a backup plan. Be prepared to make your presentation without your aids.

Above and beyond these dos and don'ts, there is one more piece of advice that should not be ignored—practice, practice, practice. Not only can practice improve your overall performance, it can alert you to problems with your presentation aids. For example, we once watched a consultant put almost everything in her talk on transparencies. As soon as she projected something onto the screen, she would turn around and point out the numbers that she thought were important. Unfortunately she stood right between the screen and the projector so that most of the information was projected onto her back. If she had practiced in front of others before making the presentation, the problem could have been avoided.

## Technology and Presentation Aids

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Only a dozen years ago, a hand-drawn poster would have been an acceptable presentation aid in most situations. This is no longer the case. The availability of presentation software has increased audience expectations and made it possible for speakers to create more professional-looking presentation aids. You are probably familiar with some presentation software. Among the more popular products are Microsoft PowerPoint, Adobe Persuasion, Correll's Presentation, and Astound's Astound! **Presentation software** is used to create slides that can be displayed on an overhead projector, a computer monitor, or directly from a computer onto a screen. Most presentation software packages also contain features for printing a speaker's notes and handouts.

The first question you should ask yourself is whether you even need a slide to make a particular point. Sometimes a message can be communicated more effectively through words alone. As the use of presentation software has become more popular, many listeners complain that even the simplest presentations have become dull displays of unnecessary slides that waste everyone's time. Although we cannot provide comprehensive instruction on how to use presentation software, we can urge you to follow some basic design principles regardless of the software you use. Figure 11.4 provides five guidelines for designing computer-based presentation aids.

**Restraint** Presentation software offers such a dazzling array of graphics, fonts, colors, and other visual elements that the first inclination is to use them all. Resist the



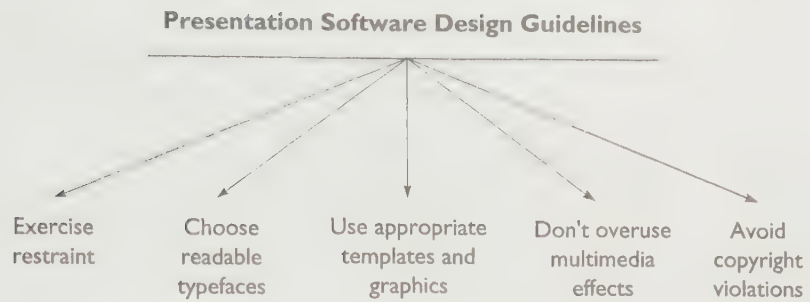


FIGURE 11.4 Presentation Software Design Guidelines

temptation. More often than not, a simple slide will be much more effective than a complex one.

We offer two recommendations that can help you decide how much is “just right” for a presentation using computer-generated slides: (1) Make only one point on each slide and (2) Follow the 6-by-6 rule. Each slide should make only one point, and the title of the slide should state that point. Everything else on the slide should support the main point. It takes less time to present two well-structured slides than to load up one slide with a muddled message.<sup>11</sup> In addition, aim for no more than six lines of text with six words per line. This rule of thumb allows your slide to contain the main heading and several bullet points below without bloating into information overload.<sup>12</sup> These recommendations also make excellent guidelines for other types of presentation aids, including hand-drawn posters and flip charts.

Please remember that an aid is only an aid; slides are not a presentation. They are not meant to be a script, read word for word. Ringle recommends balancing “tersity” and diversity. By tersity, he means making slides compact and concise while using them to add variety and interest. Finding this balance depends on understanding the value of presentation aids and the pitfalls to avoid when adding technical “sizzle” to your presentation.<sup>13</sup>

**Type** After deciding what you want to put on a slide, you will need to select a typeface or font. “Users of presentation software have instant access to a veritable candy store of typefaces with tempting names like Arial, Calypso, Gold Rush, and Circus.”<sup>14</sup> Again, exercise restraint. Too many typefaces looks amateurish. As a general rule, never use more than two different fonts on a single slide. As much as you may be tempted, avoid the fancy, but difficult-to-read, fonts. You are better off choosing common typefaces such as Helvetica, Arial, or Times Roman.

The size of type is as important as the selection of font. The best way to determine if your type is large enough is to prepare a few sample slides and project them in the room where your group will be meeting. Generally, you should try to avoid type that is smaller than 24 points. If you find that you have more text than will fit on a slide, don't reduce the size of the type. This is an indication that you are trying to put too much text on one slide. Textual slides should contain just a few key words. Reducing the size of the type to include more text not only makes for a poor visual aid, but also makes it less legible.

### *Templates and Graphics*

On a slide-by-slide basis, use a consistent style and background. From within your presentation software, you can select any of several dozen backgrounds or templates. Here too, it is important to exercise restraint. In most cases, it is better to choose a modest background that will spruce up your slide but not compete with your words, charts, or graphics.

In choosing graphics, the first question you must ask yourself is whether group members really need to see the picture you want to use. If, for example, you are making a presentation about a new medical device, it may be useful to show the actual device or a picture of the device. On the other hand, including a picture of a doctor during the presentation would probably not be useful. A picture of a doctor does not help explain the medical device.

Artwork that doesn't have a specific purpose can get in the way of your presentation. Presentation software often comes with numerous clip-art images that you may be tempted to use. Resist the temptation to use graphic elements just because you can. More often than not, clip-art graphics get in the way of messages when the graphic is not the reason for displaying the slide.

### *Multimedia*

Today's **multimedia** technology allows you to use words, charts, graphics, sounds, and animation in a single presentation. It is possible to create presentation aids so dazzling that group members remember more about the slides than about you or your message. While there are times when animation or sound may enhance understanding, these multimedia components are frequently no more than window dressing. They can be extraneous items that get in the way of the message rather than increase understanding. The last thing you want is for your group to leave a presentation wondering how you got the Tyrannosaurus rex to eat the pie chart instead of discussing the data that was represented in the pie chart.

Multimedia is often misused by presenters. Some multimedia effects are so overused that they are becoming clichés. Beginning a presentation with the theme from *Rocky* or *2001: A Space Odyssey* is not only unnecessary, but tired. If you decide to include multimedia effects in a presentation, you should be able to articulate a reason for doing so other than "it's neat." Ringle warns that the fine line between "adding enough to spice up the presentation" and "overpowering" your listeners is often trampled by enthusiastic

presenters.<sup>15</sup> Multimedia presentations may be fun to put together, but they must be well designed, well rehearsed, and well presented.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Technology not only makes it easier to create professional-looking presentation aids, it also makes it easier to appropriate the creative work of others into a presentation. When the creation of visual or audio images is a person's livelihood, the uncompensated use of such images raises ethical questions. Such unfair use may even be a violation of federal copyright laws. A discussion of whether a particular use of an image is illegal is far beyond the scope of this book; however, you should be aware of the legal and ethical implications of using unlicensed images.

A whole industry has developed to provide clip-art and clip-audio to computer users. A user who purchases these packages has the right to make copies of the images and use them in presentations. Likewise, the visual and audio images that are included with presentation software can be used in your presentations. On the other hand, if you create a computer image by scanning the image from another source or you obtain the image from the Internet, your conscience and your knowledge of copyright law must act as your guide.

## *Group Presentations*

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So far, this chapter has emphasized the ways in which oral presentation guidelines can be applied to small groups and to external audiences. If, however, you are asked to make a presentation as a member of a public group or as part of a team presentation, there are special factors to consider.

### *Public Group Presentations*

Chapter 1 describes four different types of public groups: panel discussions, symposia, forums, and governance groups. In all these settings, group members speak to a public audience.

In addition to following the oral presentation guidelines described in this chapter, you should go one step further. Make sure you have considered the unique requirements of a presentation by a public group for a public audience. As a member of a public group, you have a responsibility to yourself, your group, and your audience.

When you are participating in a public group, remember that you are "on stage" all the time—even when you are not speaking. If you look bored while another member is speaking, the audience may wonder whether that speaker has anything worth sharing. Holcombe and Stein maintain that during a public group presentation, an attentive audience will notice other group members' "gestures, facial expression, and posture. They deliberately look for

unspoken disagreements or conflicts.”<sup>16</sup> For example, if a member of Fallingstar State College’s board of trustees rolls his eyes every time another board member speaks in support of student concerns, the audience will receive a mixed message about the board’s commitment to serving student needs. Try to look at and support the other members of your group when they speak and hope that they will do the same for you.

### *Team Presentations*

When a solitary group member prepares an oral presentation, dozens of decisions must be made. When an entire group is charged with preparing a presentation, the task becomes enormously complex. Unlike a panel discussion, symposium, forum, or governance group, a team presentation is not, necessarily, designed for a general audience; its goal is to inform and influence a very special audience. A **team presentation** is a well-coordinated, persuasive presentation by a cohesive group of speakers who are trying to influence an audience of key decision makers. Team presentations are common in non-profit agencies and international corporations. They are seen in marketing presentations, contract competitions, and organizational requests for funding.

- A professional football team seeking backing for a new stadium brings a well-rehearsed group of executives and players to a public meeting at which they explain how the stadium will enhance the economic development and prestige of the community without adversely affecting the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Companies making the “shortlist” of businesses considered for a lucrative government contract are asked to make team presentations to the officials who will award the final contract.
- In a presentation to the state legislature’s appropriations committee, a state college’s board chairperson, college president, academic vice president, and student representative are given a total of forty-five minutes to justify their request for more state funding.

Team presentations are used to decide whether a group or company is competent enough to perform a task or take on a major responsibility. Team presentations are also used to present a united front when organizations are seeking support and endorsements. Thomas Leech describes how significant a team presentation can be:

Team presentations are important; the stakes are often high. There generally has to be a significant reason to gather a diverse, highly paid, and often influential group together to hear a team of presenters. And whether the presentation involves the company president or a junior designer, the presenting team has to put forth a great deal of time and money in getting ready, reflecting the importance an organization places on team presentations.<sup>17</sup>

A team presentation is not a collection of individual speeches; it is a team product. Although a symposium is a coordinated presentation, symposium



speakers do not necessarily present a unified front or have a strategic goal as their purpose. In many ways, the team presentation is the ultimate group challenge because it requires efficient and effective decision making as well as coordinated performance. Groups that work well in the conference room may fall apart in the spotlight of a team presentation.

Fortunately, the oral presentation guidelines described in this chapter can direct a group through the critical decision-making steps needed to develop an effective team presentation. Much like a single speaker, a team should (1) determine the team presentation's overall purpose or theme; (2) adapt the presentation to a specific group of decision makers; (3) adjust to the place where the team presentation will be delivered; (4) prepare and share appropriate supporting materials; (5) plan the introduction, organization, and conclusion to each team member's presentation as well as to the entire team's presentation; (6) enhance the team's credibility by demonstrating its expertise and trustworthiness; and (7) practice until the team's performance approaches perfection. In addition to these guidelines, a team must make sure that everyone, including management, knows what the team is going to do and that every detail has been considered.

Team presentations require a great deal of time, effort, and money to prepare and present. The payoffs, however, are high. Leech reports that in 1992, the Department of Energy awarded a \$2.2 billion contract for environmental cleanup to a team headed by Fluor Corporation, following team presentations by several companies. Assistant Energy Secretary Leo P. Duff said Fluor made the best impression. "All the firms had capabilities, but how the team works as a team in the oral presentations is a key determining factor."<sup>18</sup> The awarding of a \$2.2 billion contract should convert anyone who doubts the value of effective team presentations.

## Questions and Answers

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Once you or your team has completed a well-prepared presentation, you may not be finished; group or audience members may have questions or comments. The key to making a question-and-answer session a positive experience for everyone is to be prepared to answer a variety of questions and to know what to do when you don't have an answer.

If there is a single rule, it is this: answer the question. One way to practice for a question-and-answer session is to follow these guidelines:

- *Be brief.* Respond to questions with no more than three sentences.
- *Be honest.* If you don't know the answer to a question, admit it. Don't change the subject. The audience will know if you are avoiding the issue.

- *Be specific.* Provide appropriate information. Have some ready-made remarks including interesting statistics, stories, examples, and quotations that you can use in your answers.

If you run into difficult or hostile questions, remember that just because one listener disagrees with you doesn't mean that everyone is against you. If you encounter an antagonistic question, remember the listening guideline "Listen before you leap." Take your time before answering and do not strike back in anger. Try to paraphrase the question to make sure you understand what the person is asking. If you are prepared and ready for questions, you should have little difficulty dealing with the unexpected.

## Balanced Oral Presentations

"Having the floor" in a group discussion is not the same as "being on stage" for a public presentation. When preparing and delivering an oral presentation, a group member must adapt to the needs and expectations of the audience. In an oral presentation, listeners may expect to hear accurate information but not a long-winded technical report; that can be done in writing. In an oral presentation, listeners may want to understand every word but not be exposed to a dramatic performance; that should be done on the stage. Finally, an audience may expect to hear a well-developed argument but not an impassioned plea; that should be done in court.

The guidelines outlined in this chapter cannot produce a successful oral presentation—only *you* can. Yet regardless of whether you are talking to a group of friends or the state legislature, you should try to make informed decisions about purpose, people, place, preparation, planning, personal credi-

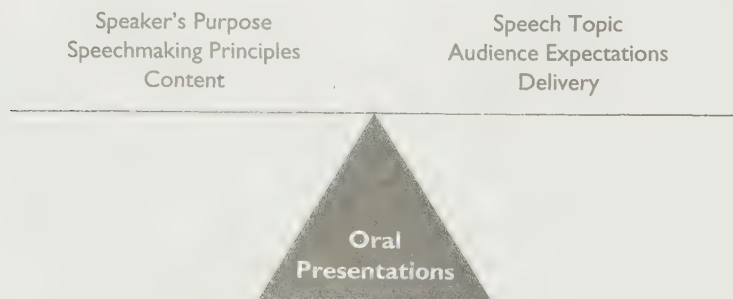


FIGURE 11.5 Oral Presentations

bility, and performance. Understanding and balancing these factors will guide you toward an effective and impressive oral presentation.

## Summary Study Guide

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- In certain situations, group members may be asked or required to give an oral presentation within a group, on behalf of a group, or as part of a team presentation.
- The seven critical decision-making guidelines in the presentation process are (1) purpose, (2) people, (3) place, (4) preparation, (5) planning, (6) personal credibility, and (7) performance.
- The first and most important step in developing a successful oral presentation is determining what you want your listeners to know, think, believe, or do as a result of your presentation.
- Audience analysis requires adapting to listener characteristics and opinions.
- Adapting to the place where you will be speaking involves asking questions about where and when you will deliver your presentation.
- Commonly used patterns of organization for an oral presentation are reason giving, time arrangement, space arrangement, problem-solution, causes and effects, stories and examples, and compare-contrast.
- An effective oral presentation should have an interesting introduction, a statement of purpose, a well-organized body, and a memorable conclusion.
- Two major factors that enhance a speaker's credibility are competence and character.
- The elements of delivery that can be practiced and controlled are use of notes, vocal characteristics, eye contact, and body movement.
- When using presentation aids to enhance your oral presentation, talk to your audience rather than to the aids, explain the aids at the appropriate time, and be prepared to present without them.
- When using computer software to develop presentation aids, exercise restraint in the selection of typefaces, templates, graphics, and multimedia effects.
- When delivering an oral presentation as a member of a public group, remember that you are "on stage" at all times.
- Developing and delivering an effective team presentation requires a rigorous approach to all phases of the speechmaking process.
- You can prepare for listener questions in advance. During a question-and-answer session you should answer questions as directly and clearly as possible.

## Groupwork *A Practice Speech*

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**GOAL** To practice delivery skills by providing experience in impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript, and memorized speaking.

**PARTICIPANTS** All members of the class.

### PROCEDURE

1. Each student should prepare a short oral presentation in which four forms of delivery are used as follows:
    - **Memorized.** Recite 30 seconds of something memorized—a poem, the Pledge of Allegiance, song lyrics, etc.
    - **Manuscript.** Read 60 seconds of any piece of prose—a book, a newspaper or magazine article, etc.
    - **Extemporaneous.** Spend 60 seconds talking to the audience about a personal experience or opinion—what hobbies you have, what you think about a campus or political issue, etc.
    - **Impromptu.** After completing these presentations, someone in the audience should ask a question. Answer the question in 30 seconds or less.
  2. Assess each speaker's performance, and answer the following questions about all of the oral presentations:

Which forms of delivery

    - were the most natural?
    - had the most eye contact?
    - were the most interesting to look at?
    - were the easiest to listen to?
-



## Oral Presentation Rating Scale

*Directions* Use the following presentation guidelines to assess how well a group member, group spokesperson, or team makes an oral presentation to the group or a public audience. Identify the speaker's strengths as well as suggestions for improvement.

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES	SUPERIOR	SATIS- FACTORY	UNSATIS- FACTORY
<b>Purpose:</b> Sets clear and reasonable goal.			
<b>People:</b> Adapts to listeners.			
<b>Place:</b> Adapts to occasion and setting.			
<b>Preparation:</b> Uses a variety of effective supporting material.			
<b>Planning:</b> Uses clear organization; effective introduction and conclusion; clear language.			
<b>Personal credibility:</b> Demonstrates competence and character.			
<b>Performance:</b> Uses voice, body, and presentation aids effectively.			

### Comments

Strengths of Oral Presentation:

Suggestions for Improvement:

## Recommended Readings

- Leech, R. (1993). *How to prepare, stage, and deliver winning presentations*. New York: American Management Association.
- Ringle, W. J. (1998). *TechEdge: Using computers to present and persuade*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Sprague, J. & Stuart, D. (1996). *The speaker's handbook* (4th ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace.

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1. Leech, R. (1993). *How to prepare, stage, and deliver winning presentations*. New York: American Management Association, p. 7.
2. Engleberg, I. N. (1994). *The principles of public presentation*. New York: Harper-Collins, pp. 36–41.
3. Hart, R. P., Friedrich, G. W. & Brooks, W. D. (1975). *Public communication*. New York: Harper & Row, p. 90.
4. Sprague, J. & Stuart, D. (1996). *The speaker's handbook* (4th ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace, p. 256.
5. Sprague & Stuart, p. 257.
6. Zarefsky, D. (1996). *Public speaking: Strategies for success*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p. 334.
7. Mayer, L. V. (1996). *Fundamentals of voice and articulation* (11th ed.). Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark, pp. 231–232.
8. Holcombe, M. W. & Stein, J. K. (1983). *Presentations for decision makers: Strategies for structuring and delivering your ideas*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, p. 169.
9. Holcombe & Stein, p. 73.
10. 3M Meeting Management Team with J. Drew. (1994). *Mastering meetings: Discovering the hidden potential of effective business meetings*. New York: McGraw-Hill, p. 140.
11. Guidelines for preparing briefings [on-line]. (1996). This document is available at <http://www.rand.org/publications/electronic/>.
12. Ringle, W. J. (1998). *TechEdge: Using computers to present and persuade*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p. 125.
13. Ringle, pp. 125 and 135.
14. Hinkin, S. (1994 August). "Designing standardized templates: First you choose it, but how do you get them to use it?" *Presentations*, 8, p. 34.
15. Ringle, p. 132.
16. Holcombe & Stein, p. 178.
17. Leech, p. 278.
18. Leech, p. 288.

P A R T F O U R

# *Resources and Tools*

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Roger Tully/Tony Stone Images

# *Planning and Conducting Meetings*

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**Meetings, Meetings, Meetings**

**To Meet or Not to Meet**

**What Is a Meeting?**

**Planning the Meeting**

Why Are We Meeting?

Who Should Attend the Meeting?

When Should We Meet?

Where Should We Meet?

What Materials Do We Need?

**The Chairperson's Responsibilities**

Pre-Meeting Tasks

Tasks during the Meeting

Post-Meeting Tasks

**Participation in Meetings**

**Dealing with Difficulties**

Nonparticipant

Loudmouth

Interrupter

Whisperer

Latecomers and Early Leavers

**Adapting to Differences**

**Evaluating the Meeting**

**Balanced Meetings**



# Meetings, Meetings, Meetings

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Over 10 million business meetings take place in the United States every day. The typical manager attends five meetings per week and averages two hours and fourteen minutes each day in a meeting room.<sup>1</sup> Odds are that you've spent your share of time in meetings. Certainly you will be attending meetings in the future. Unfortunately, many of these meetings may not be productive and rewarding group experiences. Ninety percent of managers report that half of the meetings they attend are "either unnecessary or a complete waste of time."<sup>2</sup> *Industry Week* estimates that time wasted in unproductive meetings costs U.S. businesses over \$37 billion a year.<sup>3</sup>

"I've gathered you here today because we haven't had a meeting in a while." wrong. "I've called this meeting because several of you have indicated we need a better way of coordinating this team project." right.<sup>4</sup>

Many meetings fail to achieve their purpose. Our own observations as well as studies and expert conclusions suggest the following explanations for why so many people criticize and dread meetings:

- The meeting was unnecessary and wasted time.
- The meeting's purpose was unclear.
- The meeting failed to use or follow an agenda.
- There was not enough prior notice or time to prepare.
- The right people did not attend or were not invited.
- The meeting was held at the wrong time or place.
- The chairperson was ineffective.
- There was too much political pressure to conform or take sides.

Another significant reason meetings fail is that we take them for granted. Too often we resign ourselves to attending unproductive meetings rather than trying to improve the meetings we must attend.

## To Meet or Not to Meet

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In *Running a Meeting That Works*, Robert Miller offers the following counsel:

You may hate to write reports or memos. You may feel lost without colleagues with whom to try out new ideas. You may be afraid you can't handle an assignment alone. You might prefer not to do the research yourself. . . . These are not reasons to have a meeting.<sup>5</sup>

The best way to ensure that your meeting does not waste time or frustrate members is to make sure that the meeting is really needed. Answering the following questions can help you decide whether to meet or not to meet:

- Is an immediate response needed?
- Is group input and interaction critical?
- Are members prepared to discuss the topic?

You may find alternative methods of communicating with other members can prevent unnecessary group meetings. A memo, fax, e-mail or voice mail message, or a one-to-one conversation may be sufficient.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes calling a meeting is the fastest way to inform and interact with a group of people. If an unexpected problem arises, there may not be time to write a memo or distribute a report. If a group must be made aware of a problem and has limited time to come up with a solution, a meeting is required.

As indicated in Chapter 1, one of the advantages of working in groups is that groups outperform individuals acting alone, especially when performance requires multiple skills, judgments, and experiences.<sup>7</sup> When the combined ideas, opinions, and skills of all members are needed to accomplish a goal, a meeting can be the best tool for generating synergy. Miller writes that meetings are the way “half-formed ideas [lead] to the generation of a fully formed concept.”<sup>8</sup>

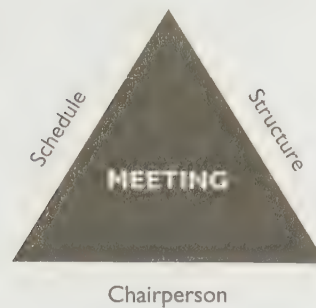
Even if immediate action is required and member input is critical, a meeting may not be productive if members are not prepared to discuss the issues before the group. Group decisions and action based on insufficient information or misinformation will not yield the best decisions. If members resent being called to a meeting, they may be unwilling to contribute their best effort.

## What Is a Meeting?

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If a group of people get together in the same room at the same time, you have a meeting, right? Wrong. You merely have a gathering of people in one place. We define a **meeting** as a scheduled gathering of group members for a structured discussion guided by a designated chairperson.

You can better understand the unique nature of a meeting by examining the three elements in the definition: schedule, structure, and chairperson. First, a typical meeting is scheduled in advance for a particular time and place; a coincidental gathering of group members does not constitute a meeting. Usually meetings begin and end at a predetermined time in a predetermined place.



**FIGURE 13.1** Three Essential Elements of a Meeting

The second essential element in a meeting is structure—the organization of discussion topics and tasks to facilitate the achievement of a group’s goal. Meetings can be formal and highly structured or informal and loosely structured. A meeting using parliamentary procedure is an example of a formally structured meeting.

Informally structured meetings may not follow strict rules for conducting a group’s business. In such meetings, members may interject their ideas and opinions at any time during the discussion of an issue. Voting may not be used as a means of making decisions; instead the group may infer majority opinion on the basis of comments made during the discussion.

The third element of a meeting is a designated chairperson. A **chairperson** is a group member appointed or elected to conduct the meeting. The chairperson is not necessarily the group leader but a person responsible for guiding the group through discussion topics or tasks in an orderly manner. The specific responsibilities of the chairperson are discussed later in this chapter.

#### **TOOLBOX 13.1** Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is a systematic method for conducting a decision-making meeting in an orderly manner. The chief purpose of parliamentary procedure is to protect the rights of minority members while ensuring majority rule. Parliamentary procedure requires that members be called upon to speak by the chairperson, that voting follow set procedures, and that issues be discussed and debated in the order determined by the rules. **Chapter 15: Parliamentary Procedure** summarizes the basic rules and primary motions used in meetings.

**Meeting Planning Questions**

- **Why** are we meeting?
- **Who** should attend the meeting?
- **When** should we meet?
- **Where** should we meet?
- **What** materials do we need?

**FIGURE 13.2** Meeting Planning Questions

## *Planning the Meeting*

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The success or failure of a meeting largely depends on proper planning. Anderson estimates that careful planning can prevent at least twenty minutes of wasted time for each hour of a group's meeting.<sup>9</sup> Answering the following questions can help you begin the process of planning an effective group meeting.

### *Why Are We Meeting?*

The most important step in planning a meeting is defining its purpose and goals as clearly as possible. Is the group meeting to share information, make decisions, solve problems, coordinate and implement tasks, or to motivate members? What does the group want to accomplish by the time the meeting is over?

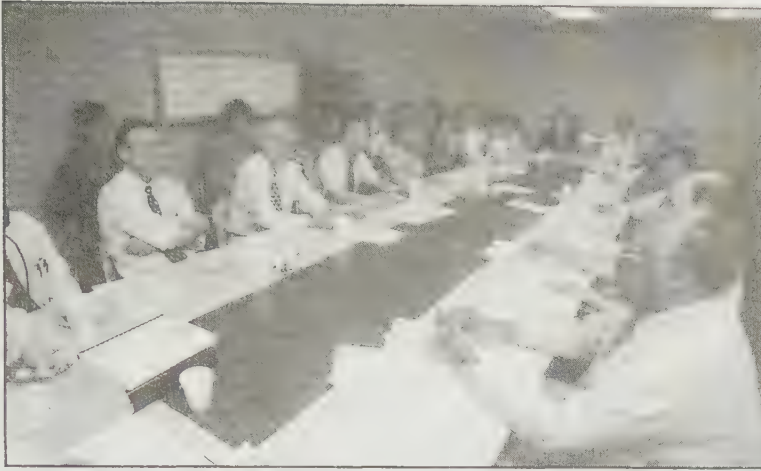
Purpose is not the same as the subject of the meeting. The subject is the topic of the discussion. Purpose identifies the desired outcome of the meeting. For example, if an executive calls her assistant and says, "Call a staff meeting next Thursday at 2:00 p.m.," the assistant may ask, "What will the staff meeting be about?" "Employer-provided day care," the executive replies. Has the executive revealed the purpose of the meeting? No. We only know that the subject of the meeting is employer-provided day care. If the executive had said, "We need to determine whether our employer-provided day care system needs to be expanded," we would know the purpose of the meeting.

It is important to ensure that a group can achieve its purpose by the end of a meeting. If the objective cannot be accomplished during a single meeting, the purpose statement should be rewritten to focus on a more specific outcome. If necessary, a series of meetings should be scheduled in order to achieve the final goal.

### *Who Should Attend the Meeting?*

The membership of many groups is predetermined. For example, you wouldn't hold a routine staff meeting and not invite the usual group of employees. However, if a task does not require input from everyone or only needs the expertise of certain people, you should select participants who can





THE success of a meeting largely depends on proper planning. What preparations do you think were necessary when planning for this meeting? (Mark Richards/PhotoEdit)

make a significant contribution. Inviting the appropriate people will save the time of individuals who do not need to attend.

When selecting meeting participants, try to include members who will be affected directly by the outcome of the meeting. In addition, choose participants with special expertise, different opinions and approaches, and the power to implement decisions. Although you may be tempted to invite only those people who agree with your point of view, individuals who dis-

agree or who represent minority opinions can provide a more balanced and realistic discussion of issues. Diversity in your group members' backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints can add new perspectives, ideas, and support for any actions the group agrees upon.

Another major consideration in assembling a group is to make sure that it is a manageable size. The larger a group, the more difficult it will be to manage. According to Antony Jay, an **assembly** consists of one hundred or more people gathered to listen to a speaker make a presentation.<sup>10</sup> Such a group is much too large to ensure the effective interaction of interdependent members working toward a common goal. A **council** is a meeting of forty or fifty people in which the group listens to several speakers. Usually, a council has too many participants for a high degree of interaction but is sufficiently small enough to allow some audience participation. A **small group meeting** is composed of twelve or fewer members who have equal opportunities to become fully involved in all discussions and decision making. Try to limit a small group meeting to fewer than twelve participants; a group of five to seven members is ideal.

### *When Should We Meet?*

The next step is deciding what day and time are best for the meeting. Should the meeting be in the morning, in the afternoon, after work hours, or during lunch? Avoid scheduling group meetings near holidays or at the beginning or end of the week when members may be less focused on working. Determine what time the meeting should begin as well as what time it should end. Don't schedule more time than is necessary to accomplish the meeting goal. For a time-consuming and difficult goal, you may decide that more than one meeting will be necessary.

Contact your group members to find out when they are available, and schedule the meeting at a time when the most essential and productive

**TOOLBOX 13.2** Meeting Through Technology

When group members are far apart, teleconferencing and videoconferencing technology may be a practical alternative to a face-to-face meeting. Careful planning is needed to take advantage of these technologies. For on-site meetings, you may be able to use computerized meeting scheduling. If you work for a company or organization with a computer network, you may have access to a calendar program with a group scheduling feature. These programs can provide an instant list of times and dates when all group members are available. The program will schedule the meeting, notify the participants by e-mail, and enter the meeting on their calendars. **Chapter 16: Technology and Groups** discusses opportunities for using computer programs to aid in scheduling meetings as well as the available technology for conducting teleconferences and videoconferences.

participants are free. A meeting that only a few members can attend will not be very productive and will waste the time of those who do show up.

### *Where Should We Meet?*

Choose a location that is appropriate for the purpose and size of the meeting. The room should be large enough, clean, well lit, not too hot or too cold, and furnished with comfortable chairs. Although you may have little control over such features, do your best to provide an appropriate and comfortable setting. Working in an attractive meeting room can make a group feel more important and valued. Also, the meeting room should be located away from distractions such as ringing phones or noisy conversations. Finally, check to see whether the room is available at the required time and then reserve it if necessary.

### *What Materials Do We Need?*

The most important item to prepare and distribute to the group is the meeting's agenda. The agenda tells the group what topics will be discussed and in what order. In addition to the agenda, it may be necessary to distribute reports or other reading material that the group must be familiar with in order to contribute to a productive discussion. Ask group members what materials they need. Make sure that any distributed reading material is relevant to the meeting's purpose, is essential for participation, and is not unnecessarily long. Distribute all materials far enough in advance of the meeting so that everyone has time to prepare. Plan on having extra copies available at the meeting. In addition, make sure that supplies and equipment such as markers, paper, flip charts, chalk, or projectors are available to the participants.

## The Chairperson's Responsibilities

If you are the chairperson of a meeting, you have a tremendous amount of influence over, and responsibility for, the success of the meeting. Although the chairperson may or may not be responsible for planning the meeting, it is the chairperson who must conduct the meeting and who is often responsible for following up on decisions after the meeting is over. A chairperson is not necessarily the leader of a group. In some cases, a skilled facilitator is assigned the task of chairing meetings so that the group's leader has the opportunity to function as an active participant.

Effective chairpersons maintain order during meetings and facilitate productive discussions by making sure they have fulfilled their responsibilities prior to, during, and after the meeting.

### Pre-Meeting Tasks

Prior to a meeting, notify everyone who should attend, preferably in writing. Your announcement should include a clear statement of purpose, expectations of participants, and the time, location, and duration of the meeting. After the meeting has been announced, all the materials that participants need, including the agenda, should be distributed in advance. It is important to check with all members to confirm that they are planning to attend. If necessary, send a brief reminder before the meeting.

As the chairperson, you must be fully prepared for the discussion. Gather any additional information you need to participate in and understand the discussion. Think through the issues from different perspectives other than your own.

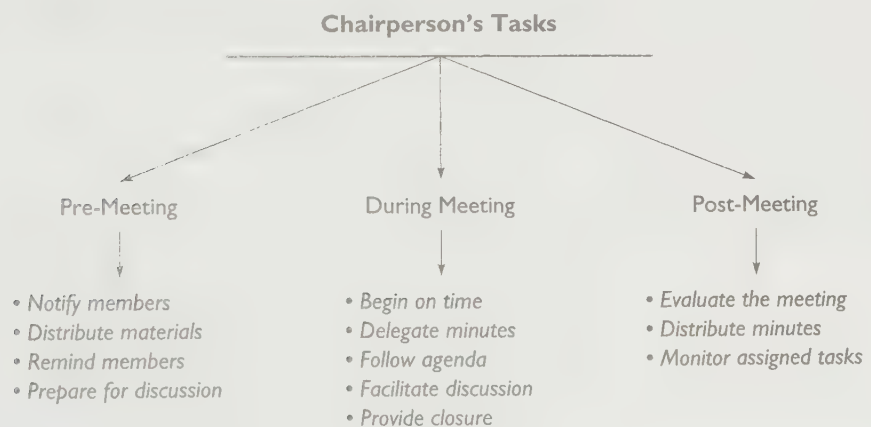


FIGURE 13.3 Chairperson's Tasks

### *Tasks during the Meeting*

Linkemer contends that during the meeting, effective chairpersons “balance strength with sensitivity; they balance knowing where they want the meeting to go with allowing the group to sometimes take it way off course; they balance having something to say with the restraint to say nothing; they assume the role of traffic cop in discussions without coming across with stifling authority.”<sup>11</sup>

The agenda will be your guide to keeping the discussion moving in an orderly way. The meeting should begin at the scheduled time. Starting on time establishes a norm for the group and can, in subsequent meetings, minimize late arrivals. Make sure all members have an agenda and determine who will take the minutes of the meeting. Attendance should then be taken and noted in the minutes.

If you are chairing a group’s first meeting, introductions may be necessary to help reduce primary tension. Clearly state the meeting’s purpose, and with that in mind, ask the group to review the agenda and make any revisions that may be needed. At the completion of such preliminary tasks, you can proceed through the agenda items as planned.

If you are the chairperson, make sure that the meeting sticks to the purpose of the discussion and the items on the agenda. Monitoring the time devoted to each agenda item and summarizing group progress keeps the meeting moving along at a reasonable pace. When the group’s discussion drifts too far from the meeting’s purpose, remind members of their goal.

As the chairperson, you should refrain from dominating the meeting. Your first priority is facilitating the group’s discussion. When the group tackles problem solving and decision making, an open and balanced discussion of all sides of an issue should be encouraged. Recognize hidden agendas and

#### **TOOLBOX 13.3** Agendas and Minutes

An agenda outlines the items to be discussed or tasks to be accomplished at a meeting. During the meeting, the agenda acts as a road map guiding the group through discussion items in an orderly way. The minutes of a meeting are the official record of your group’s discussion and activities. The minutes of a meeting allow your group to review what was accomplished since the last meeting and what still needs to be accomplished. The task of taking minutes should be delegated to another group member so the chairperson is free to focus on guiding the group’s discussion.

**Chapter 14: Agendas and Minutes** describes how to prepare a meeting’s agenda and take accurate and useful minutes. Samples of model agendas and minutes are provided.



make sure that minority viewpoints are expressed and discussed. Know when to call for a vote or final decision.

Finally, the chairperson should provide a sense of closure to the meeting by ending efficiently and effectively. Briefly summarize what was accomplished and what still needs attention and action. If work has been delegated to different members during the meeting, those responsibilities should be reviewed. If the group plans to schedule another meeting, ask for agenda item suggestions and, if possible, set the date, time, and place of the next meeting. The meeting should be adjourned by politely thanking the group for their time and contributions. End the meeting on time.

### *Post-Meeting Tasks*

After the meeting is over, take time to evaluate the meeting's success and determine what should be done to improve the next meeting. If you are the chairperson, it is your responsibility to distribute the minutes of the meeting and any reports that were prepared. As members work on projects outside the group, you may provide assistance to group members and check their progress. A chairperson's job does not end when a meeting adjourns; it may continue right up to the minute a subsequent meeting is called to order.

## *Participation in Meetings*

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Just as a single member has the power to derail a meeting with disruptive behavior, a single member has the potential to make every meeting more productive. Plan on being an active participant by preparing for the meeting in advance, by reviewing agenda items, and by thinking about your opinions on the issues. Read any material that was distributed and be prepared to discuss it. In some cases, your role as a participant may be minimal. If a special presentation or subcommittee report is being shared, you can be most effective by listening attentively. In most small group meetings, however, everyone is expected to participate. Contribute to the discussion whenever you have something relevant to add but avoid monopolizing or dominating the discussion.

As a participant you should also be willing to share some of the chair's responsibilities. Help keep the group focused on the meeting's purpose and agenda. Don't abandon a chairperson faced with other members who are distracting or disruptive. A good chairperson will welcome your assistance; and an unprepared or inexperienced chairperson will surely need your help.

## *Dealing with Difficulties*

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A carefully planned meeting can fail if the chairperson or group allows individuals to persist in behavior that disrupts the group process. All group members should address such behavior rather than assuming the chairperson can or will resolve the problem. Doyle and Straus write that “dealing with these problem people is like walking a tightrope. You must maintain a delicate balance between protecting the group from the dominance of individual members while protecting individuals from being attacked by the group.”<sup>12</sup>

Although there can be as many potential problems as there are group members, there are a few particular behaviors that cause most of the headaches. Based on our own observations and some of the “people problems” identified by Doyle and Straus,<sup>13</sup> we offer several suggestions for dealing with member difficulties in meetings.

### *Nonparticipant*

It is not necessary to have full participation at all times just for the sake of participation; the goal is to have a balanced group discussion over the course of the entire meeting. The group should be concerned, however, with members whose participation is always minimal. Are they anxious, unprepared, or uninterested? Apprehensive or introverted participants should not be forced to contribute before they are ready. At the same time, though, make sure you provide opportunities for reluctant members to become involved in the discussion. Increasing your eye contact with less talkative members may encourage their participation by signaling your interest in anything they might have to say.

When nonparticipants do contribute, respond positively to their input to demonstrate that you see the value in their ideas. Negative responses to apprehensive group members can inhibit participation for the rest of a meeting.

### *Loudmouth*

A member who talks more than the others is not necessarily a problem. However, when a person talks so much that no one else gets a chance to speak, the group has a loudmouth problem. At first, allow loudmouths to state their ideas and acknowledge that you understand their position. It may be necessary to interrupt them to do so. Then shift your focus to other members or other issues by asking for alternative viewpoints. If a loudmouth continues to dominate, remind him or her of the importance of getting input from everyone. The next time the group meets, you may want to assign the loudmouth the task of taking minutes as a way of shifting focus from talking to listening and writing.

***Interrupter***

Sometimes group members are so preoccupied with their own thoughts and goals that they interrupt others when they have something to say. Although most interrupters are not trying to be rude, their impatience and excitement cause them to speak out while other members are still talking. When a group member continually interrupts others, it is time to interrupt the interrupter. Invite the previous speaker to finish making her or his point. A more aggressive option is simply not to allow the person to be interrupted, by intervening and saying, "Let Mary finish her point first, and then we'll hear other viewpoints."

***Whisperer***

Carrying on a confidential conversation with another group member during a meeting can distract everyone else. The interference caused by members who are whispering or snickering makes it hard to concentrate and listen to other members. Directing eye contact toward such sideline conversations may make the offenders more aware of their disruptive behavior. If the behavior persists, ask the talkers to share their ideas with the group. This action will probably stop the behavior and may uncover issues that deserve discussion.

***Latecomers  
and Early  
Leavers***

People coming in and out of the meeting after it has begun can distract those who have managed their time to arrive on schedule and stay through the entire meeting. If you are the chairperson, start the meeting at the scheduled time and avoid wasting meeting time by stopping to review what has already been accomplished. A government employee described his frustration with latecomers in this way:

It irks me when the chairperson stops to review everything that was missed for a person who comes in late to a meeting. I feel like I'm being punished for being on time and the other person is being rewarded for inconsiderate behavior.

Let latecomers sit without participating until they have observed enough of the meeting to contribute to the discussion. It is not advisable to publicly reprimand or embarrass latecomers or early leavers, but you may want to talk to them after the meeting about what can be done to enable them to attend the entire meeting.

Members who come in and out of the meeting to do other work at the same time cannot be full participants. Such behavior is distracting; it communicates to the rest of the group that the meeting is not very important. These members should be asked politely either to stay for the entire discussion or to take care of other work in advance.

Whether you are dealing with a loudmouth or a latecomer, keep the group's best interests in mind. When difficulties are not addressed, participants may feel so uncomfortable they stop attending meetings altogether.

When you have to confront a dysfunctional member, be sensitive and focus on the behavior rather than making personal attacks. Point out the behavior and suggest alternative behavior, as well as the consequences if the alternative is not followed. Don't overreact; your intervention can be more disruptive than the problem member's behavior. It is best to begin with the least confrontational approach and then work toward more direct methods as necessary.

## *Adapting to Differences*

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Very often, group members from different cultural, ethnic, and age groups do not share similar expectations about group roles. Dodd reports that some cultures expect more directive leadership and control than others.<sup>14</sup> In countries with more socialist governments such as Denmark, Australia, or Israel, people expect there to be equality among members. In other countries such as India or Mexico, where there are strong traditional beliefs about class differences, group members may expect a leader to exert more power.

In some cultures, it would be considered disrespectful for a young group member to interrupt an older one or for a new group member to challenge a veteran member. In such cases, it may be tempting to interpret lack of participation for inattention or lack of interest when, in fact, the group member is demonstrating a high degree of respect for the group and its leader.

At one college, the president appointed an advisory council to coordinate activities designed to improve the racial climate on campus. One member of the group reported the following observation:

One council member was a former diplomat from an African country. He rarely spoke but when he did, he always began with a very formal "Madam Chairman." After that he would deliver a three to five minute speech in which he would summarize what had been said and offer his opinion and recommendations. When he was finished, he would thank everyone for listening. At first we didn't know how to respond. It was so formal, so complex. Eventually we learned to expect at least one "speech" from this member. We learned to listen and respond to a very different style of participation.

This member defined his participant role very formally and acted accordingly. Patience on the part of other participants allowed his custom of formality to be accommodated.

Group members may represent different ages, genders, educational and work backgrounds, religions, political viewpoints, and cultures. All of these elements can affect how a meeting is conducted and how well a meeting



meets its goals. Adapting to the diversity of group members involves understanding and accommodating differences while pursuing shared goals.

## *Evaluating the Meeting*

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To determine the effectiveness of meetings and identify areas for improvement, chairpersons and participants should evaluate their meetings. There are a number of ways to determine the success of a meeting:

- Throughout the meeting the chairperson may ask for comments before moving on to the next item. This practice allows the group to modify its behavior and improve interaction when discussing the next item.
- At the end of the meeting, the chairperson can briefly summarize perceptions of the meeting and ask for comments and suggestions from the group before adjourning.
- After the meeting, participants can be approached individually for their comments and suggestions for improving the group's next meeting.
- A Post-Meeting Reaction Form can be distributed to members before adjourning.

A **Post-Meeting Reaction (PMR) Form** is a questionnaire designed to collect and assess reactions from meeting participants. The chairperson should prepare the form in advance of the meeting, distribute the form at the meeting, and collect it before participants leave. Regardless of the format of the questions, a post-meeting reaction form should ask questions about the issues being discussed, the quantity and quality of group interaction, and the effectiveness of meeting procedure. The feedback from the group should then be used to improve the next meeting. The sample PMR form in the Assessment section at the end of this chapter contains many of the typical questions asked to evaluate a group's meeting. It is important to remember that the evaluation questions should match the purpose of each meeting.

## *Balanced Meetings*

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Just as every group is unique, every meeting is different. Planning and conducting effective meetings require balanced decision making. The group should strive for an ideal meeting but also understand what can realistically be accomplished in a single meeting.

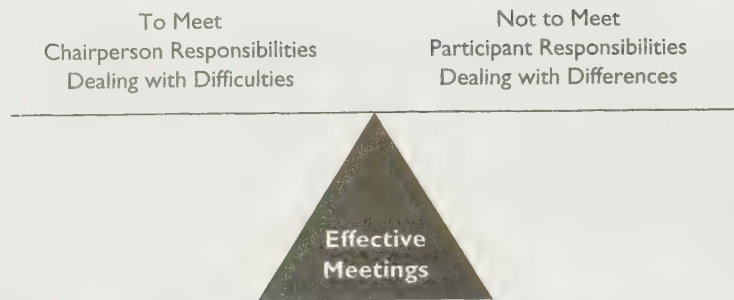


FIGURE 13.4 Effective Meetings

The 3M Meeting Management Team describes the critical role of the chairperson as “a delicate balancing act” in which chairpersons must

... influence the group’s thinking—not dictate it. They must encourage participation but discourage domination of the discussion by any single member. They must welcome ideas but also question them, challenge them, and insist on evidence to back them up. They must control the meeting but take care not to overcontrol it.<sup>15</sup>

Effective meetings achieve a balance between the different needs of individual members and the necessity of accomplishing the group’s goal. Balanced meetings result in greater productivity and member satisfaction.

## Summary Study Guide

- The primary characteristics of a meeting are schedule, structure, and a designated chairperson.
- All group members should understand the purpose and goals of a meeting.
- For an effective meeting, decide who should attend, where and when the meeting should be held, and what materials participants will need to be prepared.
- As a chairperson, you may be responsible for a variety of tasks including planning, preparing for, conducting, and following up a meeting.
- As a participant, you should take responsibility for the success of the meeting by being prepared, contributing to the discussion, and sharing the responsibilities of the chairperson.
- Control of disruptive behavior should focus on achieving the group’s goal and maintaining group morale.

- Meetings should be adapted to the diverse needs and expectations of participants.
- Learn from experience by evaluating meetings and using such feedback to improve future meetings.

## Groupwork *Meet the People Problems*<sup>16</sup>

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**GOAL** To understand the principles and apply textbook suggestions to other common people problems that arise during meetings.

**PARTICIPANTS** Groups of 5–7 members.

### PROCEDURE

1. Read the descriptions of the five additional people problems that often arise in meetings.
2. As a group, prepare at least two strategies for dealing with each type of people problem.
3. Groups should share their strategies with the entire class and discuss the following question: What general, overriding principles emerge as effective strategies for dealing with member difficulties?

### *People Problems*

*The Broken Record.* Brings up the same point or idea over and over again. Regardless of what other members say, the Broken Record keeps “singing the same song.”

*The Headshaker.* Nonverbally responds in a disruptive manner. Shakes head, rolls eyes, groans, slams books shut, madly scribbles notes after someone has said something. Members begin reacting to what the Headshaker does rather than what is said.

*The Know-It-All.* Uses age, seniority, credentials, and experience to argue a point. Know-It-Alls declare “I’ve been here for twenty years, and I know this won’t work”; or “I’m the only one here with an accounting degree, so you’d better listen.”

*The Backseat Driver.* Keeps telling everyone what they should do or should have done. “If we’d met earlier this week, we could have avoided this problem”; “I would have let everyone read the report rather than summarizing it.”

*The Attacker.* Launches personal attacks on other group members or the chairperson. Purposely zeros in on and criticizes the ideas and opinions of others.

## Post-Meeting Reaction (PMR) Form

*Directions* After a selected meeting, complete the following PMR form by circling the number that best represents your answer to each question. After compiling the answers from all participants, including the chairperson, use the results as a basis for improving future meetings.

1. How clear was the purpose of the meeting?  
unclear   1   2   3   4   5   clear
2. How useful was the agenda?  
useless   1   2   3   4   5   useful
3. Was the meeting room comfortable?  
uncomfortable   1   2   3   4   5   comfortable
4. How prepared were group members for the meeting?  
unprepared   1   2   3   4   5   well prepared
5. Did everyone have an equal opportunity to participate in the discussion?  
limited opportunity   1   2   3   4   5   ample opportunity
6. Were different viewpoints listened to?  
not listened to   1   2   3   4   5   listened to
7. How would you describe the overall climate of the meeting?  
hostile   1   2   3   4   5   friendly
8. Were assignments and deadlines made clear by the end of the meeting?  
unclear   1   2   3   4   5   clear
9. How would you rate this meeting overall?  
unproductive   1   2   3   4   5   productive

*Additional Comments*



## Recommended Readings

- Levasseur, R. E. (1994). *Breakthrough business meetings: Shared leadership in action*. Holbrook, MA: Bob Adams.
- Miller, R. F. (1991). *Running a meeting that works*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series.
- 3M Meeting Management Team with J. Drew. (1995). *Mastering meetings: Discovering the hidden potential of effective business meetings*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

## Notes

1. 3M Meeting Management Team with J. Drew. (1995). *Mastering meetings: Discovering the hidden potential of effective business meetings*. New York: McGraw-Hill, p. 11.
2. Wiggins, D. (1998). "How to have successful meetings." *Journal of Environmental Health*, 60, p. 1. Available: <http://db.texshare.edu/ovidweb/ovidweb.cgi>.
3. Sheridan, J. (September 4, 1989). The \$37 billion waste. *Industry Week*, p. 11.
4. Adapted from Miller, R. F. (1991). *Running a meeting that works*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series, p. 3.
5. Miller, p. 13.
6. Anderson, K. (1997). *Making Meetings Work: How to plan and conduct effective meetings*. West Des Moines, IA: American Media Publishing, p. 17.
7. Katzenbach, J. R. & Smith, D. K. (1993). *The wisdom of teams: Creating the high-performance organization*. New York: HarperBusiness, p. 9.
8. Miller, p. 11.
9. Anderson, p. 18.
10. Jay, A. (1991). How to run a meeting. In *The articulate executive: Improving written, interpersonal, and group communication*. Boston: Harvard Business Review, p. 100.
11. Linkemer, B. (1987). *How to run a meeting that works*. New York: American Management Association, p. 42.
12. Doyle, M. & Straus, D. (1976). *How to make meetings work*. New York: Jove, p. 105.
13. See Doyle & Straus for additional people problems, pp. 107–117.
14. Dodd, C. H. (1995). *Dynamics of intercultural communication* (4th ed.). Madison, WI: Brown & Benchmark, p. 91.
15. 3M Meeting Management Team, p. 78.
16. Based on the people problems developed by Doyle & Straus, pp. 107–117.

# *Agendas and Minutes*

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## **The Importance of Agendas**

Elements of an Agenda

Additional Options

Double Checking the Agenda

Determining the Order of Items

Using the Agenda

## **The Importance of Minutes**

Select a Recorder

Determine What Information to Include

Formal and Informal Minutes

Taking Minutes

Prepare the Minutes

## **Balanced Agendas and Minutes**

# The Importance of Agendas

The agenda is one of the two most powerful tools in meeting management. The other [is the] minutes of the meeting.<sup>1</sup>

An **agenda** is the outline of items to be discussed and the tasks to be accomplished at a meeting. A well-prepared agenda can serve many purposes. First and foremost, the agenda is an organizational tool—a road map for the discussion that helps group members remain focused on their task. When used properly, an agenda helps participants prepare for a meeting by telling them what to expect and even how to prepare. As a time management tool, Thomsett suggests that “you can use the agenda to plan the time required for a meeting . . . and then to control the total amount of time spent on each topic.”<sup>2</sup> An agenda also provides a sense of continuity for a group—it tracks member assignments and provides status checks for work in progress. After a meeting, the agenda can be used to assess a meeting’s success by determining the extent to which all items on the agenda were addressed.

When you are very busy or when a meeting is routine and predictable, writing up an agenda for a future meeting may seem like a waste of time.

Just the opposite is true. Failure to plan and prepare an agenda denies a chairperson and a group one of the most powerful tools in meeting management. Burleson notes that “although agendas can be formal, informal, or anywhere between . . . the operative rule is: If there is a meeting, there ought to be an agenda.”<sup>3</sup>

Agendas are an absolute must for every meeting. One study reported that nearly one-third of participants blamed the failure of meetings on the lack of an agenda; nearly two-thirds (63 percent) said no written

agenda was distributed in advance.<sup>4</sup> A carefully prepared agenda is one of the best ways to make meetings more productive.<sup>5</sup> The Software Engineering Institute, a federally funded research and development center at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, considers agendas so important “that employees are allowed to walk out of meetings that convene without one.”<sup>6</sup> The 3M Management Team concludes that a “written agenda, distributed in advance, is the single best predictor of a successful meeting.”<sup>7</sup>



MOST public groups—such as this city council meeting—use agendas and minutes to document their work. What are the benefits to this group of recording meeting minutes on a computer during the meeting? (Spencer Grant/PhotoEdit)

## *Elements of an Agenda*

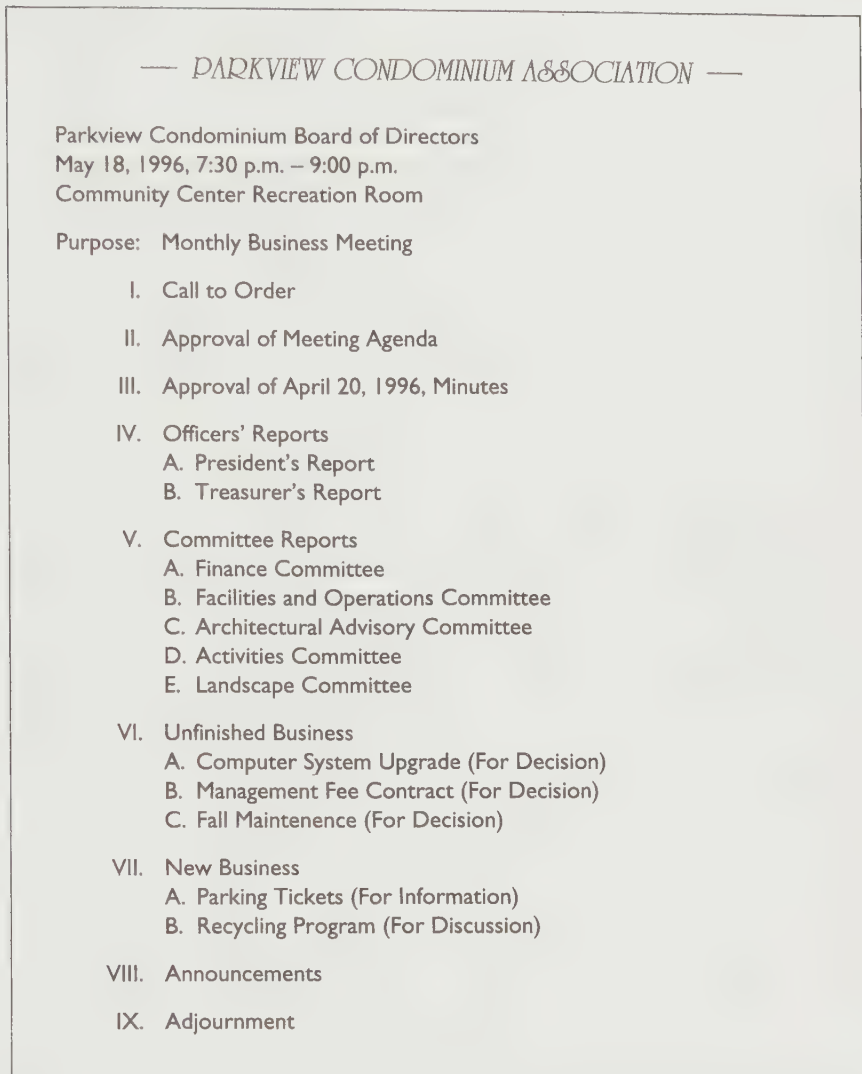
While it is the chairperson's responsibility to prepare and distribute an agenda in advance of the meeting, group input can ensure that the agenda covers topics important to the entire group. Asking group members to suggest items for an agenda ensures that important issues are discussed and that members feel involved in the process of planning the meeting.

A traditional business meeting agenda will include the following items:

- *Purpose of the Meeting.* A clear statement of the meeting's objective and topics for discussion allows members to come prepared to focus on a particular objective.
- *Names of Group Members.* A list of all invited participants lets members know who will be part of the discussion.
- *Date, Time, and Place of the Meeting.* Clearly indicate the date, time, duration, and precise location of the meeting.
- *Call to Order.* This is the point at which the chairperson officially begins the meeting.
- *Approval of the Agenda.* Members are given the opportunity to correct or modify the agenda before approving it for the meeting.
- *Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes.* For groups that meet on a regular basis, the minutes of the previous meeting are reviewed, revised if necessary, and approved by the group as an accurate representation of the last meeting's business.
- *Reports from Individuals and Subcommittees.* Individuals and subcommittees within a group report on the progress of their activities. When organizations hold formal business meetings, the officers of the group report on their work, after which subcommittee reports are presented.
- *Unfinished Business.* This section of the meeting includes any topics that require ongoing discussion from meeting to meeting or issues the group was unable to resolve during the last meeting.
- *New Business.* New discussion items are outlined in this category. If the issue needs to be addressed again at the next meeting, it will be listed as unfinished business on the next agenda.
- *Announcements.* Any items of information that the group needs to know but that do not require any discussion are announced.
- *Adjournment.* The chairperson officially dismisses the participants and ends the meeting.

Not all meetings will follow the traditional sequence of agenda items. The customs of the group and the purpose of the meeting will determine the format of the meeting's agenda. For example, if the purpose of the meeting is to solve a problem, the agenda items may be in the form of questions rather than the key word format of a more formal agenda. The questions would be determined by the problem-solving method the group has decided to use.





**FIGURE 14.1** Sample Business Meeting Agenda

### *Additional Options*

In addition to identifying topics to be addressed during the meeting, agenda items should include any information that helps group members prepare for the meeting.

- Note the amount of time it should take to complete a discussion item or action. This will let the group know the relative importance of the item and help them manage the time available for discussion.

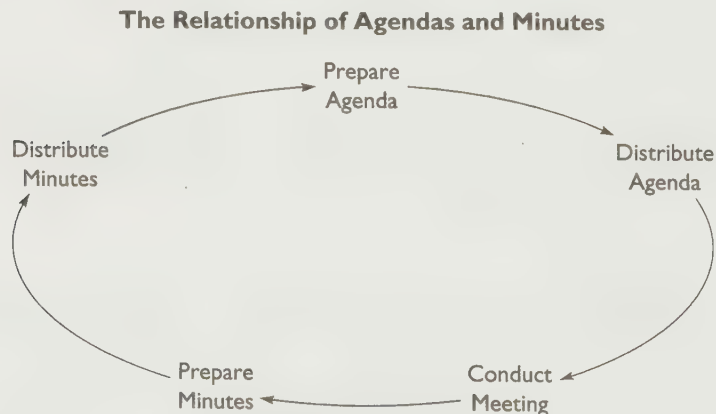
any revisions before proceeding with the discussion. The agenda is then used to guide the meeting. Time spent carefully planning the agenda will have been wasted if the group doesn't agree to follow it during the meeting.

## The Importance of Minutes

The **minutes** of a meeting are the written record of a group's discussion and activities. Minutes become a group's long-term memory by documenting its activities from one meeting to the next. McEachern points out that minutes can reinforce group norms because they are a record of group behavior.<sup>10</sup> By looking through a group's minutes over a period of time, you can learn about a group's activities, measure how productive it has been, learn about individual member contributions to the group, and know whether group meetings tend to be formal or informal.

In formal meetings, minutes are legal documents as well as the historical records of an organization. In such cases, minutes should be very accurate because they can be used in a court of law to verify an action or document a person's statements. Within some organizations, signed copies of minutes are kept in a secure place for reference.

The minutes record discussion issues and decisions for those who attended a meeting and provide a way to communicate with those who didn't attend. Because the minutes of a meeting are often read by others, they are also an opportunity to reward members by officially recognizing their good work. For example, the minutes could state that: "The officers officially thanked Marla and Kevin for chairing the annual Fourth of July picnic com-



**FIGURE 14.3** The Relationship of Agendas and Minutes

**TOOLBOX 14.1** Parliamentary Procedure and Minutes

The designated clerk (or secretary) of a group plays an important role before, during, and after meetings that use parliamentary procedure to conduct business. Parliamentary rules specify that the clerk keep accurate records of the proceedings of an organization, be prepared to read aloud all motions and their amendments during a meeting, prepare a roll call of members and call it when necessary, and preserve all important meeting documents. **Chapter 15: Parliamentary Procedure** provides a summary of the rules and practices that should be understood by the person assigned the task of recording minutes.

mittee.” Of most importance, however, the minutes help prevent disagreement over what was decided in the meeting and what tasks individual members agreed to do.

### *Select a Recorder*

The chairperson is ultimately responsible for the accuracy and distribution of the minutes. However, during the meeting the chairperson must be free to facilitate the group’s discussion. The task of taking minutes should be delegated to another group member. The group may designate a recorder or secretary to take minutes at every meeting or have members take turns volunteering to do the minutes. Regardless of who takes the minutes, the chairperson is responsible for checking their accuracy and distributing a copy to all group members.

### *Determine What Information to Include*

For the most part, the format of the minutes should follow the format of the agenda. If you are assigned to take minutes, you will probably include much of the following information:

- Name of the group
- Date and place of the meeting
- Names of those attending
- Name of person who chaired the meeting
- Names of absent members
- Exact time the meeting was called to order
- Exact time the meeting was adjourned
- Name of the person preparing the minutes
- Summary of the group’s discussion and decisions using agenda items as headings
- Specific action items

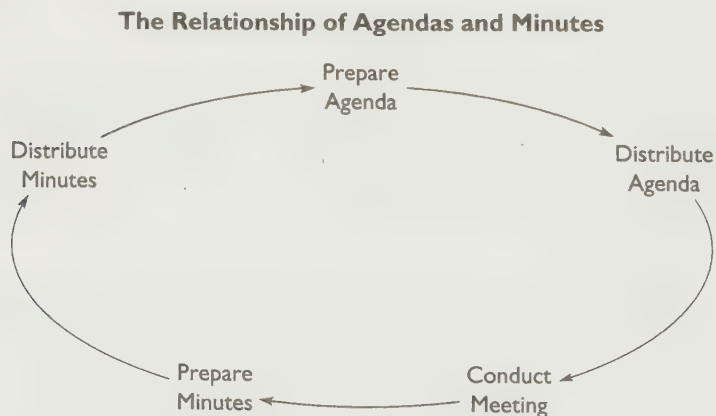
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- Summary of the group’s discussion and decisions using agenda items as headings
- Specific action items

**Action items** are tasks that individual members have been assigned to do after the meeting. An action item includes the person's name, the assignment, and the deadline. For example, an action item might look like this: "Action: M. Smith will review the prices charged by competing companies by the next meeting." It is helpful to underline action items in the minutes to make it easier to refer back to them when reviewing the group's progress.

### *Formal and Informal Minutes*

The more formal the meeting, the more information must be included in the minutes. For example, if a group is using parliamentary procedure, the minutes must include all proposed motions and the results of any votes. In order to take accurate minutes for such meetings, the recorder or secretary should be familiar with parliamentary procedure. The minutes from informal meetings normally don't include such details. The samples in Figure 14.4 and Figure 14.5 illustrate the difference between formal and informal meeting minutes.

### *Taking Minutes*

Well-prepared minutes are brief and accurate. When summarizing a group's discussion, it is important to remember that the minutes are not a word-for-word record of everything that every member has said. To be useful, they must briefly summarize the discussion. The following guidelines should be used when taking minutes:

- Instead of describing the discussion in detail, write clear statements that summarize the main ideas and actions.
- Make sure to word decisions, motions, action items, and deadlines exactly as the group makes them in order to avoid future disagreements and misunderstandings.
- If there is any question about what to include in the minutes at any point during the meeting, ask the group for clarification.
- Obtain a copy of the agenda and any reports that were presented to attach to the final copy of the minutes. These documents become part of the group record along with the minutes.

Sometimes it is useful to tape-record the group's discussion so the secretary can refer to it when preparing the minutes. A tape recorder can ensure accuracy, but before choosing to use one, you should carefully consider its potential effect on the group discussion. Group members should be informed that the minutes will be taped. Understand that some people feel uncomfortable being recorded and may limit their participation.

**Be Objective.** Although the minutes of a meeting should be brief, they also must be accurate and impartial. Burleson contends that "minutes should never contain personal reflections, opinions, insights, or be written from a

**Draft Summary Minutes for the  
SCA Legislative Council Meeting—1994**

Presiding: Bruce Gronbeck, SCA President  
Parliamentarian: Gaut Ragsdale  
Recording: James L. Gaudino, Executive Director  
Location: Acadia Room  
Marriott, New Orleans, LA

**Note:** The following material represents a summary of actions taken by the 1994 Legislative Council. Attendance reports are included in Appendix A.

**Call to Order:** The meeting of the 1994 Legislative Council was called to order by Bruce Gronbeck, SCA President, at 1:10 P.M. on Friday, November 18, 1994, in the Acadia Room of the New Orleans Marriott, New Orleans, LA.

**Opening Remarks:** Gronbeck welcomed the Council members and offered opening remarks. The President presented an overview of the agenda and an estimated schedule for conducting the Council's business. He then reminded the Council members to sign the attendance sheets and to pick up handouts distributed at the meeting. The President asked that all members of the council speak loudly or use wireless microphones so that all could be heard.

**Announcements:** Gronbeck made the following announcements:

Judith Trent will be the new SCA 2nd Vice President (assumes position following the Annual Meeting).

The newly elected LC Members-at-large are Judith C. Espinola, Guo-Ming Chen, and Kelly S. McNeillis. They will serve on the 1995-97 Legislative Councils.

**Approval of Minutes from the 1993 Legislative Council Meeting:** The minutes of the 1993 Legislative Council meeting were approved as distributed by voice vote.

**Approval of Standing Rules:** A motion was made and seconded establishing the following as Standing Rules of the 1994 Legislative Council (LC): 1) LC members must sign the roll for each LC meeting. 2) Only LC members shall offer motions and vote. 3) Substantive motions and amendments must be provided in writing when presented to the LC. 4) No LC member may move the previous question (close debate) prior to an opportunity for one pro and one con speech on a debatable motion. The motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Review of the FY 93/94 Financial Reports:** The SCA Income and Expense Report, the SCA Balance Sheet, SCA Investment Summary, and the Report of Independent Auditor were distributed to Council members prior to the meeting. Finance Board Chairperson Trent presented a summary of each report. A motion was made and seconded to accept the FY 93/94 reports as presented. The motion carried.

**Requests for SCA affiliate status:** A motion was made and seconded that the Legislative Council grant the status of affiliate organization to the Association for Chinese Communication Studies. After discussion, the motion carried.

**Resolutions:** The following resolutions were considered (see Appendix B for the text of the resolutions):

**Statement on Language Arts:** A motion was made to adopt the Resolution Endorsing Comprehensive Language Arts. After brief discussion, the motion carried.

**Statement of Principles on Information Highway:** A motion was made to adopt the Resolution establishing a Credo for Free and Responsible Use of Electronic Communication Networks. After discussion, a motion was made and seconded to amend the resolution by changing "We support freedom of expression and condemn attempts to limit any form of information processing or electronic communication" to "We support freedom of expression and condemn attempts to constrain information processing or electronic communication." Some concern was expressed about overly general language in the resolution and inadequate treatment of copyright issues. The motion to amend carried. After discussion, the original motion carried.

**Adjournment:** The first Council meeting was adjourned at 5:40 P.M., November 18, 1994.

(This sample is composed of edited *excerpts* selected from 14 pages of minutes recorded at the Speech Communication Association's 1994 Legislative Council meeting that took place at the association's annual convention. For clarification of parliamentary actions recorded in the minutes, see Chapter 15.)

**FIGURE 14.4** Sample of Formal Minutes

**Domestic Violence Class Discussion Group Meeting  
February 10, 1995, in Library Conference Room 215**

Present: Gabriella Hernandez (chairperson), Eric Beck,  
Terri Harrison, Will Mabry, Tracey Tibbs

Absent: Lance Nickens

Meeting began at 2:00 P.M.

**Group Topic:** The group discussed whether emotional and verbal abuse should be included in the project. Since we don't have much time to do our presentation, we decided to limit the topic to physical abuse only.

**Research Assignments:** Since the assignment is due in two weeks, we decided to divide the issue into different topics and research them on our own.

Action: Eric will research why people stay in abusive relationships.

Action: Gabriella will research the effects on the children.

Action: Terri will find statistics and examples of the seriousness of the problem.

Action: Will is going to find out why and how the abuse happens.

Action: Tracey will find out what resources are available in the area for victims.

Members will report on their research at the next meeting.

**Absent Members:** Lance has not been to the last two class meetings. We don't know if he is still going to participate in the group. Action: Gabriella will call Lance.

**Class Presentation:** We need to think of creative ways to make a presentation to the class. The group decided to think about it and discuss it at the next meeting.

**Next meeting:** Our next meeting will be at 2:30 on Tuesday, February 14th, in the same place. Action: Terri will reserve the room.

The meeting ended at 3:15 P.M.

(Meeting notes taken by Tracey Tibbs)

**FIGURE 14.5** Sample of Informal Minutes

position. Minutes are factual. Minutes are neutral."<sup>11</sup> If you are the recorder of the minutes, you must be objective. Report the facts and all sides of a discussion accurately and never insert your own personal opinions. The minutes must reflect the experience of the entire group, not just the person chosen to document it.

**Be Discreet.** There are times when the group may have a discussion or make comments they want kept "off the record." The group may need to blow off steam or feel comfortable discussing a sensitive matter. Reporting such comments would only serve to create a less open communication climate, in which members guard what they say for fear of being held accountable for it later. If the group determines that something should not appear on record, that decision should be honored by whomever is responsible for taking the minutes.

### *Prepare the Minutes*

Immediately after the meeting, the minutes should be prepared for distribution. The longer you delay, the more difficult it will be to remember the details of the meeting. For this reason, you should report not only the date the



## CLOSE TO HOME JOHN MCPHERSON



**As soon as Mrs. Felster began to read the minutes of the last meeting, the board members knew she was not going to work out as the new secretary.**

CLOSE TO HOME © 1994 John McPherson/Dist. of UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

meeting took place but also the date you prepared the minutes. If a discrepancy is later found in the minutes, members may conclude that too much time elapsed before the minutes were prepared. One way to reduce elapsed time is to compose the minutes during or immediately after the meeting. In some meetings, minutes may be taken on a laptop computer.

Once the minutes have been prepared, they should be given to the chairperson for review. The chairperson will either request that corrections be made or distribute the minutes to group members for review before coming to the next meeting. Once the group has officially approved them, the minutes are final and become the official record of the meeting.

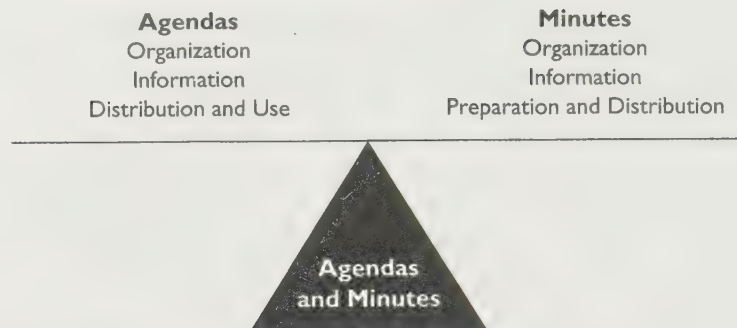


FIGURE 14.6 Agendas and Minutes

## *Balanced Agendas and Minutes*

Agendas must be designed to promote maximum participation and productivity during a meeting without including more items than the group can realistically manage. A group will accomplish little if too few items are placed on a meeting's agenda. An agenda with too many items may require the group to make hasty decisions without adequate discussion.

The most difficult part of taking minutes is balancing the need to accurately report the group's discussion against the need to be brief. Including too many details of the meeting is unnecessary because the minutes would be difficult for the group to use later. Minutes that contain too little information will not accurately represent what the group has accomplished. If the minutes are referred to later, any vagueness in their preparation will confuse the group. Agendas and minutes must contain a balance of information in order to be useful tools for group meetings.

## *Summary Study Guide*

- An agenda is an outline of the items to be discussed and the tasks to be accomplished at a meeting.
- The traditional business agenda will include the following information: purpose, names, date, time, place, call to order, approval of agenda and minutes, reports, unfinished business, new business, announcements, and adjournment.

- Agenda items should be ordered in a sequence that permits the group to complete all of the tasks.
- The minutes of the meeting are the written record of the group's discussion and actions.
- Although the chairperson is responsible for the accuracy and distribution of the minutes, another group member should be designated to take the minutes.
- The format of the minutes will generally follow the format of the meeting's agenda; the formality of the minutes will depend on the nature of the meeting.
- Well-prepared minutes are brief, accurate, objective, and appropriately discreet.

## Groupwork *Designing an Agenda Form*

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**GOAL** To highlight the essential elements in a meeting agenda and create a useful agenda form for future meetings.

**PARTICIPANTS** Groups of 5–7 members.

### **PROCEDURE**

1. As a group, use the textbook's list of essential elements and additional options for an agenda to create an original, standardized agenda form.
  2. Make sure that your fill-in-the-blank agenda form reminds your group of things that should be noted or covered before, during, and after a meeting.
  3. In addition to the topics for discussion and action, your agenda should include items and information that help group members prepare and participate effectively. Examples are the names of participants, invited guests, material needed for the meeting, action item assignments and deadlines, time allocated for discussion or action, and scheduled oral presentations.
-

## Agenda and Minutes Checklist

*Directions* Use the following checklist to assess the extent to which a meeting's agenda and minutes helped your group work toward achieving its goals.

### Agenda

- \_\_\_\_\_ The agenda was prepared and sent to all participants in advance of the meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The purpose of the meeting was clearly stated on the agenda.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Depending on the purpose and formality of the meeting, the agenda contained essential elements such as the date, time, place, and duration of the meeting, names of participants, and discussion and action items.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All the agenda items could be discussed during the allotted time of the meeting.

### Minutes

- \_\_\_\_\_ A recorder was assigned or volunteered to take minutes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Depending on the purpose and formality of the meeting, the minutes contained essential elements such as the time and date of the meeting, names of the chairperson, recorder, and participants, a summary of the discussion and decisions, and action items.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The recorder accurately summarized the key ideas and action items.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The minutes were objective and discreet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The minutes were prepared and distributed to group members within a short time after the meeting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The minutes would be understandable to people who did not attend the meeting.

### Recommended Readings

- Burleson, C. W. (1990). *Effective meetings: The complete guide*. New York: John Wiley.
- Doyle, M. & Straus, D. (1976). *How to make meetings work*. New York: Jove.
- Thomsett, M. C. (1989). *The little black book of business meetings*. New York: AMACOM.



## Notes

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# INFORMATION LITERACY





# INFORMATION LITERACY AND LIBRARY RESOURCES

## CHAPTER 9

**Susan M.S. Chang**

The need to access information is a universal one, and this need will be with you long after you finish school. Many people think that using information and library resources relates only to doing a research paper or finding the information required in an assignment. In truth, people need information in all aspects of their lives, whether it be a personal or family issue (What car should I buy? Where's the best place to build our dream house? How do I design a Web page?) or work-related (How do I find the right job? Where can I get those statistics my boss wants? How can we expand our business into new markets?). The Internet has vastly improved our access to information, and the wealth of information available to us all is exciting and challenging. It seems like we have the world at our fingertips, just a touch of the keyboard away. But the very magnitude of the amount of information available to us is what sometimes makes finding the answer to our questions more difficult, rather than less. The Internet is not very well organized, and efficient use of this wonderful resource involves more than simply typing a keyword into your favorite search engine and clicking <search>! And, believe it or not, traditional resources such as books and periodicals are often a more efficient source of information than random Web surfing. Many of these traditional resources are now delivered electronically, which should satisfy the "high tech" tastes of even the greatest bibliophobe.

The trick to efficient information retrieval is to know what resource to use when. At times, a quick keyword search using a search engine will provide the answer you need. Other times, using the more traditional resources such as books and periodicals will fill your information needs more quickly and completely. Electronic databases are often just what you need. All these resources are valuable, and once you have a sense of which resource to use for different information needs, you will have made a good start. Of course, you must also know how to evaluate these resources and to use them properly, avoiding plagiarism. Therefore, this chapter will discuss:

- ▶ Structuring your research
- ▶ Choosing the proper resource(s)
- ▶ Efficiently using the appropriate tools to access these resource(s)
- ▶ Using and evaluating these resource(s)
- ▶ Citing and documenting your research

## STRUCTURING YOUR RESEARCH AND DEFINING THE TOPIC

Often when students begin to research a topic, they do so with a less-than-clear idea of exactly what that topic is. It is very important that you carefully define your topic so that you can approach the research in an efficient and appropriate way. To assist with this, it is often very helpful to consult reference materials from your library. Reference materials include encyclopedias (both general and subject-specific), dictionaries and handbooks, and are frequently offered in both print and electronic format. By reading through these general discussions of your topic, you should be able to:

- ▶ Define your topic
- ▶ Determine exactly what it is you wish to learn
- ▶ Clarify the question(s) that need answers
- ▶ Fill in the gaps in your understanding of the topic

Another advantage to beginning your research in the reference collection is that you will be able to narrow or broaden your topic as need be. Often people choose topics that are too broad to handle within the scope of the assignment or task. For example, if the assignment is to write a five page paper on a business topic, you would be hard pressed to cover a large topic such as “e-commerce” in the space allowed. By familiarizing yourself with the topic, you should be able to identify a smaller topic to focus on, such as “marketing forces behind the growth of e-commerce”.

Conversely, you may find while exploring the reference collection that your topic is too narrow, and there may not be enough information to support your paper. You may need to broaden your topic instead. In either case, good reference materials such as an encyclopedia will help define your topic appropriately.

In addition to consulting reference resources, it is important to ask yourself questions, the answers to which will help you determine the resources to consult next. Ask yourself:

- ▶ How familiar am I already with the topic?
  - ▶ Do I need in-depth, comprehensive information or just a few details?
  - ▶ Is the topic very time-sensitive; is it very current and still changing?
  - ▶ Is the topic public knowledge? Well documented or obscure?
  - ▶ What are my time constraints in obtaining the information I need?
- (Don't procrastinate!)

Now is a good time to start defining appropriate search terms, keywords and subject headings. In particular, start thinking of synonyms for your subject—many topics are referred to by several different names (e.g., “death penalty” and “capital punishment; “assisted suicide” and “euthanasia”). This will impact search results, particularly when you are doing a keyword search (see “Keyword vs. Field Searching” below). Try to think of both narrower and broader terms as well, so that you will be prepared to search indexes and tables of contents.

## Example

Research Topic: Marketing forces behind the growth of e-commerce

Primary Search Terms:

(1)	E-Commerce	
	Synonyms or related terms:	Electronic Commerce Internet Commerce Internet Business Business to Business Commerce
	Narrower terms:	Online Sales Online Advertising
(2)	Marketing	
	Synonyms or related terms:	Public Relations Demographics
	Narrower terms:	Advertising Merchandising

Remember, you can combine the various search terms in different ways. Hint: On Proquest Direct, and many other databases, you can find suggestions for related or narrower terms by clicking on <Subject List>.

## Exercise

For a topic of your choosing, try to find at least two related search terms and two narrower search terms to assist you in your database and index searching. Is there also a broader term which might be helpful?

Research Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Synonyms or related terms: \_\_\_\_\_

Narrower term: \_\_\_\_\_

Broader term: \_\_\_\_\_

## CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE RESOURCES:

As mentioned above, the Internet is not your *only* resource—while very valuable indeed, other resources may in fact be more appropriate for particular information needs. The difficulty is in deciding which resource to use, and to use all resources appropriately.

### PRIMARY SOURCES

Primary sources are first-hand accounts of events or time periods, and can be found in many different formats. First-hand accounts can be derived from interviews, diaries, pictures, letters, etc., and can be very valuable sources for “color” as well as facts. You may find that interviewing an expert in the field you are researching is a valuable way to get direct information as well as opinions. Likewise, an “eye-witness” account of an event, or an era, may give you an excellent sense of time, place and impact. You can find these eye-witness accounts in many different resources, such as newspapers, autobiographies, and manuscripts as well as through face-to-face contact.

### REFERENCE MATERIALS

Reference materials include encyclopedias, handbooks, dictionaries, directories, and almanacs, both general and subject-specific. They are a very good source of facts, dates, timelines, etc., and may be the quickest way to locate answers to specific, objective questions. However, their usefulness is not limited to this purpose. As mentioned in section (1), reference sources are often an excellent place to begin your research on a topic. They can give you a good, solid overview of the topic you will be studying, fill in gaps in your understanding of the topic, help you determine the additional resources you will need, and finally, help you narrow or broaden your topic if need be. A good reference source can “ground” you in your topic and help you structure your research. And today, many reference sources are available in both print and electronic format!

### MONOGRAPHS

Monographs are detailed, comprehensive books which provide in-depth coverage of a single topic. In most libraries, monographs make up the circulating portion of the book collection. They are useful when you need complete, truly in-depth information about your subject, and can add greatly to your knowledge and understanding of your topic. You can also retrieve information selectively through careful use of the index and/or table of contents of monographs. The positive side to monographs is their comprehensiveness; the negative is that they are usually not good sources for very current, up-to-date information. The good news for those who prefer using electronic resources whenever possible is that many monographs are now available as electronic, or “e” books. Check your library’s web page for links to e-books.

### AUDIOVISUALS

Video- and audiocassettes have become standard materials in academic libraries, and can be very useful learning tools as they add extra dimension to the printed word in books. They can be excellent primary sources, and the visual or audio stimuli can truly make your subject come alive.



## PERIODICALS

“Periodical” is a term used to describe a publication that comes out “periodically”, such as magazines, journals and newspapers. Issues of periodicals may come out daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly, and thus they are an excellent source of the current, up-to-date information lacking in books. Bear in mind, however, that a three page magazine article will by necessity cover a fairly specific, narrow topic and will not have the depth of a 250-page book.

Magazines are “general audience” publications covering popular topics. They are excellent resources for learning about current events, social issues and issues of general interest. In contrast, journals are research-oriented, academic, scholarly publications and are “peer-reviewed”. Before an article appears in a journal, a panel of the author’s peers will review it, and will verify that it represents quality research and truthful information. Therefore, journals are usually more reliable and credible than many magazines. Their scholarly approach and focus may require some sophistication, however.

Periodicals are now published in both print and electronic format. Electronic delivery over the Internet has greatly increased most library patrons’ access to full-text periodicals. It is important to stress that while the periodical may be “delivered” over the Internet, it is not just an Internet site, but a “real” magazine or journal article equivalent to the print version.

## ON-LINE AND CD-ROM DATABASES

Many on-line and CD-ROM databases consist of materials which were once available only in print format, usually as reference books, monographs or proprietary reports. These information databases are very useful for in-depth information in specific subject areas, and in addition to containing a great deal of information are easily searchable due to the electronic format.

## INTERNET SITES

Last, but by no means least, Internet sites have become extraordinarily valuable sources of information from educational, governmental, business and organizational entities. The Internet is responsible for a veritable explosion of information, much of which was previously unavailable or difficult to find and obtain. In particular, the Internet is very useful for obtaining government publications. Used appropriately, the Internet is an incredible resource!

Hopefully, this discussion has helped you see that a number of different resources are available to you and that all may be valuable and useful in different situations. Particularly when writing a research paper, it is important to use many different resources to ensure that you have gotten the best, well-rounded and documented information.

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## EXERCISE

For the following information needs, indicate which resource(s) would be best to use:

1. You need to find out the capital of Botswana and its current population \_\_\_\_\_
2. You want to know more about the most recent school shooting \_\_\_\_\_

3. You've heard much about the charismatic speeches given by a well-known public figure and want to have more than the transcript of the speeches \_\_\_\_\_
4. You want to learn more about starting your own business, from start to finish \_\_\_\_\_
5. You would like to have a better understanding of some of the newer telecommunications technologies \_\_\_\_\_
6. You want to learn more about an organization devoted to animal rights \_\_\_\_\_
7. You have been hearing about research currently being conducted to explore new treatments for bipolar disorder \_\_\_\_\_
8. You would like to know what it was like to immigrate to the United States from a war-torn country \_\_\_\_\_

Sometimes, several different resources can augment and supplement each other.

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## ACCESSING THE RESOURCES

Now that you know which resources you want to use, how do you access them? You know how to find the Internet, of course, and can access on-line databases from the Library's computers and Web page. This section will focus on finding books, audio-visuals and periodicals using the online catalog and periodical indexes. Later sections will address the "nuts and bolts" of electronic database searching and using the Internet.

### BOOKS AND AUDIOVISUALS

The tool used to find books and audiovisuals in your college library is the online catalog. Nearly all college campuses have left behind the old card catalogs and now provide their catalog in an electronic version, often Internet based. While catalog databases differ from college campus to campus, most have similar features and allow for keyword as well as title, author and subject searches. You will find help using the online catalog in the library and/or on the library web page.

You should be able to find the following information from a record on the online catalog:

- **Location:** Books and audiovisuals can be shelved in a number of locations in the library. "Main Stacks" and "Circulation" are common terms for materials such as monographs, which circulate for the maximum time period—often two or three weeks. "Reference" houses the reference collection discussed earlier. Usually the reference collection is separate from the circulating collection, and most often these materials are for in-library use only. "Periodicals" is where you will find magazines and journals, of course, and often the "Audiovisuals" are shelved in a separate location as well. The location for electronic books is often an Internet link. Many libraries have special locations for archival or otherwise specialized collections. Finally, most libraries have "Reserve" collections, which are materials that circulate for shorter loan periods, are often specifically meant for a particular class, and are shelved behind the circulation desk.
- **Status:** Most online catalogs will indicate whether an item is already checked out to another patron and when it is due back to the library. Many online catalogs allow patrons to put a hold on books such as these, so that when the book is

returned they will be able to check it out first. Other status entries include “Lost” or “Overdue”.

- **Call Number:** While most public and school libraries shelve books according to the Dewey Decimal System, you will find that most academic, college and university libraries use the Library of Congress System instead. This may seem a bit confusing at first, but you will soon grow accustomed to it. Library of Congress call numbers all begin with at least one letter, usually two, and occasionally three. Thus the collection is organized alphabetically by call number. Each letter of the alphabet represents a general area of study (see general outline); for instance, you will find technology books in the “T’s” and the social sciences in the “H’s”. The second letter further narrows the topic, such that telecommunications books are shelved under “TK” and business books under “HF”. The number that follows the letter should be considered a whole number up to the decimal point, and anything after the decimal point is a decimal number. If you need assistance at first in locating items, don’t hesitate to ask the library staff for help. Soon you will become familiar with the area(s) of the collection that house those items of most interest to you, and you will be able to browse the collection as well as use the online catalog to find materials you need.

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## GENERAL OUTLINE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION

A —GENERAL WORKS  
B —PHILOSOPHY. PSYCHOLOGY. RELIGION  
C —AUXILIARY SCIENCES OF HISTORY  
D —HISTORY: GENERAL AND OLD WORLD  
E —HISTORY: AMERICA  
F —HISTORY: AMERICA  
G —GEOGRAPHY. ANTHROPOLOGY. RECREATION  
H —SOCIAL SCIENCES  
    HF—BUSINESS AND ACCOUNTING  
J —POLITICAL SCIENCE  
K —LAW  
L —EDUCATION  
M—MUSIC AND BOOKS ON MUSIC  
N—FINE ARTS  
P —LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
Q—SCIENCE  
    QA—COMPUTER SCIENCE  
R —MEDICINE  
S —AGRICULTURE  
T —TECHNOLOGY  
    TK—TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
U —MILITARY SCIENCE  
V —NAVAL SCIENCE  
Z —LIBRARY SCIENCE

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## PERIODICALS

Indexes are used to access periodicals. Up until the last decade or so, most indexes were only available in paper format—and they were tedious to use. You needed to look up your subject heading, then write down the citations to articles found there, find the magazine or request it through interlibrary loan, and photocopy the article(s) you needed. Today, electronic indexes, whether Internet or CD-ROM based, have completely revolutionized access not just to the citations to magazine and journal articles but also to the full text of these articles themselves. This means that you have access not simply to the print periodicals physically found in the library, but often to thousands of additional publications.

Libraries subscribe to many different electronic full text periodical indexes, but the examples illustrated in the section below demonstrate search strategies that apply to most of them. Remember to always use the “Help” screens when using a database for the first time or when switching between databases.

## ELECTRONIC DATABASE SEARCHING

Electronic databases, without a doubt, have placed enormous amounts of information at our fingertips. The Internet, “E” books, subject databases, catalogs and full-text indexes make finding information much easier. However, there are a number of ways that you can refine your electronic search techniques to make searching even more efficient. This section will discuss a few of these techniques, using examples from an electronic periodical index called Proquest Direct. While the examples are specific for Proquest Direct, the strategies and techniques should be applicable to most other databases with some adaptation.

## KEYWORD vs. SUBJECT SEARCHING

Keyword searching and subject searching are entirely different approaches to locating information. It is very important to understand the difference between them and the times when each is appropriate.

Keyword searching is a “blind” approach. The computer has no idea what you are looking for. You simply type in words that you think would appear in the articles you want to see, and the computer looks for those words, without knowing their meaning. For example, if you do a keyword search using the word <windows>, the results will include articles on Windows NT as well as those on storm windows and the window of opportunity. Keyword searching is appropriate when you are unsure of the proper subject heading for your topic and/or when you want to combine two different topics.

Subject searching is, for the computer, a “smart” search, in that the computer “knows” what you are looking for and is not just searching for a random juxtaposition of letters. You tell the computer the topic you want to research and it looks for materials that were catalogued or indexed under those subject headings. In other words, the search is only conducted in the appropriate field of the record, which in this case is the subject heading field. Subject searching is more precise but somewhat less flexible.

To do a subject search, you must know the exact subject heading that is used by the cataloguer or indexer. For instance, which term will produce hits: euthanasia, mercy killing or assisted suicide? If you choose the wrong term, you may get zero hits. For this reason, it is often useful to begin with a keyword search. You will get some irrelevant articles, and will miss some relevant ones, but if you find an article that is exactly right, you can look at the citation and find the subject headings listed there. You can then do a subject search using the exact subject heading and in that way get all the relevant materials.



The following is a basic keyword search on “workplace violence”:

### Search by word — basic

[HELP](#)

Enter a word or phrase:

BASIC

GUIDED

NATURAL LANGUAGE

workplace violence

Search

Date range:

Current (1999 - Present)

Limit to:

☐ Full text articles

☐ Peer reviewed

Publication type:

All

Search in:

Citations and abstracts

☐ Show number of articles

Searching PA Research II

It is possible to change this keyword search into a subject search by clicking on the “GUIDED” search tab and changing “Basic Fields” to “Subject”:

### Search by word — guided

[HELP](#)

Enter one or more terms:

BASIC

GUIDED

NATURAL LANGUAGE

workplace violence

in

Subject

AND

prevention

in

Subject

AND

in

Basic Fields

AND

All Article Types

in

Article Type

AND

All Publication Types

in

Publication Type

Limit to:

☐ Full text articles

☐ Peer reviewed

☐ Show number of articles

As you can see from the above example, I have limited the search term “workplace violence” to only the subject heading field. This means that only articles which have been indexed under the subject heading “workplace violence” will be retrieved. Those documents that may just incidentally use those keywords anywhere other than the subject heading field will not be retrieved.

As seen in the example, the subject heading field can be useful for streamlining your search to make the results more accurate and efficient. It is also very useful in other ways, particularly in suggesting additional search terms or search terms that might narrow your subject down. Therefore, pay close attention to the subject headings which are listed in the articles you retrieve—they may be very useful in refining your search.

## NARROWING YOUR SUBJECT

You may have noticed in the example that a second subject heading has been added to the search screen (that is, “prevention”). Including additional search terms is one approach to making your topic more manageable. When your initial search yields an unreasonable number of “hits”, you know that your topic is too broad. Proquest, for instance, will only retrieve 50 “hits”, since that is probably far more than most students are looking for. Try to find an aspect of the broader subject that interests you. For example, “workplace violence” is too broadly documented. By scanning some of the articles, and in particular looking at the other subject headings used, you can find a more manageable subject to research—in this case, what is being and can be done to prevent workplace violence. These additional search terms can be added to the search screen using Boolean operators.

### BOOLEAN OPERATORS AND OTHER ‘TRICKS OF THE TRADE’

Boolean operators are words used to combine more than one word or phrase to further refine your search or to get more comprehensive results. The most common Boolean operators are “and”, “or”, and “not”.

**And:** The connecting “and” is used to narrow your search down. You are adding to the requirements that must be fulfilled for an article to qualify for your search results. For instance, if you type “workplace violence **AND** prevention”, only articles which specifically refer to both these terms will be retrieved.

**Or:** The connecting “or”, conversely, broadens your search. It is useful when a subject is referred to in various ways. For instance, if you type “capital punishment **OR** death penalty”, you will retrieve articles regardless of which synonym the author uses.

**Not:** Sometimes this will be written “and not”. This connector eliminates specific aspects of your topic which you do not want to see. For instance, if you type “antitrust legislation **AND NOT** Microsoft”, you will retrieve articles which discuss antitrust legislation but make no mention of Microsoft. Likewise, if your search term has 2 distinct meanings, you can eliminate articles which have no relevance to your search - for example, “greyhound **AND NOT** bus” if you are interested in articles about the dog, not the transportation system.

### ADDITIONAL SYMBOLS

**+ or ?:** These symbols are used for what is termed truncation, to find a root word with different endings. For example, “depart+” will yield articles with the key words of depart, departed, department, departs, etc. Some databases will retrieve plural forms of the word automatically, while others will require truncation symbols.

**( ):** Many databases use parentheses to indicate phrases or to combine three different terms and more than one Boolean operator to combine subsets of words. For instance, typing “telecommunications and (education or research)” will retrieve records which contain ‘telecommunications’ and either the term ‘education’ or the term ‘research’.

**N or N + a number:** The ‘n’ stands for ‘near’, meaning the two words or phrases should be separated by no more than a given number of other words, but can be in either order. When no number is specified, the number of terms between words is standard on that database.

**W or W + a number:** The ‘w’ stands for ‘with’ and is more restrictive than ‘n’ in that the two words or phrases must be in the same order as entered.

Remember that all databases are different! Some will use “+” and others will use “?” for truncation, for instance. Databases vary greatly over the way phrases should be used in search terms. Some databases allow for “natural language” searches, but many don’t. So be sure to check the “help” screen when using a database for the first time or switching between databases.

## SEARCH LIMITS

Many databases allow you to limit your search in other ways. For instance, Proquest Direct allows you to limit how many months and/or years of articles you want to search; e.g., you can choose to search only the most recent six months for a rapidly changing topic. Proquest Direct also allows you to limit your search to just “peer reviewed” journals (see section 3), or only those articles available full text (just in case you procrastinated and don’t have time to wait for Interlibrary Loan!). Remember, the more you can tailor your search to your specific needs, the more precise and efficient the results will be.

In summation, electronic databases have replaced and augmented many traditional resources over the past decade. They include subject-specific databases, electronic books, and full text electronic journals, and many are delivered over the Internet. While they have simplified the research process in many ways, they are not always used as efficiently as their features allow. Learning to do field-specific (e.g. subject) searches and using Boolean operators, limits and truncation will streamline your research and information retrieval steps. Use the electronic databases appropriately and efficiently, and you will be pleased with the results!

---

## EXERCISE

Choosing the Telecom database on Proquest Direct, do a basic keyword search on the topic “dsl”.

How many articles were retrieved? \_\_\_\_\_

Too many, right? So click on the “Guided” tab to refine your search.

Now do a subject search on “dsl” by choosing “subject” instead of “basic fields”.

How many articles were retrieved? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you suppose this is so? \_\_\_\_\_

Now spell out “digital subscriber line” and again do a subject search.

How many articles were retrieved? \_\_\_\_\_

What can we do to narrow the topic down? \_\_\_\_\_

Now add the second term “standards”, choose “subject” instead of “basic fields”, and combine the two terms using the AND Boolean operator.

How many articles were retrieved? \_\_\_\_\_

How many of these articles are full text? \_\_\_\_\_

How many of the full text articles are from peer-reviewed journals? \_\_\_\_\_

Now try your own search on a broad topic of interest to you.

What is the topic? \_\_\_\_\_



Is it a subject heading? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, can you find the appropriate subject heading by scanning the keyword search results? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, what is the correct subject heading to search? \_\_\_\_\_

How many articles are retrieved? \_\_\_\_\_ Is this too many? \_\_\_\_\_

How can you narrow the search down and decrease the number of "hits"? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your second search term? \_\_\_\_\_

Which Boolean operator did you use to combine the terms? \_\_\_\_\_

How many articles are retrieved now? \_\_\_\_\_

How many of them are full text? \_\_\_\_\_

How many are them are from peer-reviewed journals? \_\_\_\_\_

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## USING THE INTERNET

The Internet is a remarkable resource, providing access to more information for more people than could have been imagined just a decade ago. Used appropriately and in conjunction with other resources, the Internet will be a valuable source for most of your information needs. However, two important facts must be remembered when using the Internet:

- No one is in charge of the Internet. This means that it is essentially unorganized.
- Anyone can put anything (legal, at least) on the Internet. This means that the page you just accessed could be a pack of lies.

Appropriate, careful and evaluative use of the Internet is essential, and this section will discuss ways to address these two facts. First, you need to know ways to access the information the Internet provides, even though it is unorganized. Second, you need to know how to evaluate the information you access to ensure you have retrieved true, reliable and unbiased information.

## ACCESSING INTERNET SITES

Most people access the Internet using the search engine with which they have become most comfortable. They enter a keyword, hit search, sigh and begin sifting through the links they have retrieved. In many cases, this is satisfactory enough. But recent studies have shown that search engines, no matter how large, only have access to a fraction of what is present on the Web, and what's left is termed "the Invisible Web". How can you retrieve information from the sites the well-known search engines can't "see"? It is essential that you are aware of the different types of search engines and directories available to you to assist you in getting comprehensive results. Single, multiple, specialized search engines as well as subject directories will all be useful.

**Single Search Engines:** There are a number of single search engines on the Web, including Yahoo, AltaVista, HotBot, Excite, Google, and Northern Light to name just a few. Some are true search engines, while others combine search engine capabilities with human-compiled directories. An excellent site, which compares search engine features and capabilities, is SearchEngineWatch (<http://www.searchenginewatch.com>), reviewing the various features of the search engines to help you choose the best one for your present needs. Many single search engines can perform fairly sophisticated searches, using Boolean terms, field searching and limits, as well as sort results. However, keep in mind that none of the single search engines even comes near to accessing all of the sites on the Web.

**Multiple Search Engines:** Multiple search engines, also called "metasearch" or "megasearch" engines, take your search term(s) and run simultaneous, parallel



searches of selected single search engines. Some of the more well known multiple search engines are MetaCrawler, Dogpile and Ixquick. On the positive side, since the search is being conducted in more than one search engine, the chances are good that what one single search engine might miss, another will find. However, since most multiple search engines only retrieve a fixed number of sites from each single search engine, the results will not be comprehensive. Also, each single search engine may allow for different Boolean terms, limits, etc., and the advanced search features they allow when searched individually may not be available when doing a multiple search engine search. A good discussion of single searching versus multiple searching can be found in the aforementioned site (6).

**Specialized Search Engines:** Many subject-specific search engines are available, and more are being developed constantly. Since these search engines focus narrowly on the sites related to a particular subject, they are often more precise and may in fact have much more comprehensive and less superfluous results. You can find directories of such specialty search engines at the aforementioned site (compiled by Danny Sullivan, editor of SearchEngineWatch), and at <http://www.com-pleteplanet.com>, (compiled by the search-technology company BrightPlanet).

**Subject Directories:** Subject directories are collections of links to Internet sites arranged under specific subject headings. While many subject directories include a search engine, the advantage to a well-designed subject directory is that you may not need to do a “search” at all! Links are provided to what are considered by the sponsor of the site to be the best sites for researching a particular topic. Often the site is described and evaluated, and this may help in determining the quality of a site. Yahoo is perhaps the most widely known subject directory, although in truth most people use Yahoo for its search engine. Many subject directories have been designed by librarians, and do an excellent job of providing a collection of subject-specific, quality Web sites. Some good subject directories include About.com (<http://www.about.com>), Librarians’ Index to the Internet (<http://www.lii.org>), Argus Clearinghouse (<http://clearinghouse.net>) and Digital Librarian (<http://www.digital-librarian.com>). The librarians on your campus most likely have compiled a subject directory on the library Web page as well, and this will be an excellent source closely aligned to your curriculum.

Successful Web searchers use a combination of the above approaches to accessing information on the Internet. Try using single engine search engines when you need to use advanced search techniques, multiple search engines when you need to “spread a wide net”, specialized search engines for technical database needs, and subject directories for general information-gathering on a topic. All these tools bring organization to the Internet and will help the efficiency of your search.

## EVALUATING WEBSITES

Remember, anyone can put anything on the Internet, just as long as it’s legal. So there is nothing to stop someone from putting false information on his or her site. While traditional resources may have errors, and even false information, before these resources are added to the library collection, the librarians evaluated them for quality. With Internet resources, you’re on your own! It is very important that you scrutinize each Web page you use for your research, or your own work will be suspect.

Think in terms of the standard newspaper interview questions:

### WHO:

- Who is responsible for the content of the page? (Note that this is not necessarily the webmaster). Can you tell? You should be able to.

- What are the qualifications of the person(s) responsible for the content? Are they experts in their field? Are their titles and affiliations spelled out?

**WHAT:**

- Is the material presented documented? If not, can it be? Is it biased? Is it fact or opinion? Is it broad in scope?

**WHERE:**

- How does this address look? What is the domain address? While the distinctions have become somewhat blurred, “.com” is a commercial site (they’re probably trying to sell you something!), “.org” is an organization site (watch for bias), etc.
- Is the site easy to navigate?
- Are their links to other sites? Are they accurate and up-to-date?
- Is there advertising on the page?
- Has the site won awards, or been reviewed elsewhere?

**WHEN:**

- On what date was the page created?
- When was it last updated?
- Does it seem like it will be around for a while, or is it just a temporary site?

**WHY:**

- Why does this site exist? What are the motives of the creators of the site for putting this information on the Web? To inform? To share information? Or to promote or sell something?

You must be a critical evaluator of Internet sites. Your research will only be as good as the sources you use.

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## EXERCISE

Using a subject directory such as Librarians’ Index to the Internet (<http://www.lii.org>), choose a site related to your major and answer the evaluation questions outlined above:

Site: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHO:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHERE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHEN:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now, use a multiple search engine such as Dogpile (<http://www.dogpile.com>) to search a keyword from your field. Answer the questions for the first "hit" your search finds:

**WHO:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHERE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHEN:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**WHY:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Was the site you found using the search engine of equal quality to the one from the subject directory? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

## CITATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Proper documentation is essential to the research process, now more than ever. Because the Internet makes "cut and paste" so easy, plagiarism is on the rise on college campuses. You will need to provide verifiable citations with your research. You will also need to understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

Often students are not aware that paraphrasing without citing the source is plagiarism. They believe that as long as they change the order of the words around, they do not have to cite the source. This is a less obvious form of plagiarism than the "cut and paste" variety, but nonetheless is still plagiarism. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 10th edition, defines the verb "plagiarize" as follows: "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own : use (a created production) without crediting the source". Any information you use in your research that is not considered "common knowledge" must be credited to the source. But how do you define "common knowledge"? When unsure, it's always best to err on the side of caution. Always credit the source when using other people's theories or ideas.

Precise documentation is also very important. There are several styles of documentation that dictate the format of a citation for various types of sources, including books, periodicals, on-line sources, primary sources and the Internet. The most commonly used are the MLA (Modern Language Association) and APA (American Psychological Association) styles. The manuals for these can be found in your library; always verify the style preferred by your professor.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout your life, you will need information—this is undisputable fact. Accessing that information in a world of rapidly changing information delivery can be a challenge, but with the proper approach you will learn to gather the information you need efficiently and appropriately. Find out what you need to know by:

- ▶ Structuring your research
- ▶ Choosing the proper resource(s)
- ▶ Efficiently using the appropriate tools to access these resource(s)
- ▶ Using and evaluating these resource(s)
- ▶ Citing and documenting your research correctly

One last very important point: your librarian may be your best resource. Academic librarians will not find the information for you, because the skills you will learn in finding the information for yourself are necessary to lifelong learning. However, librarians are there to teach you those skills and help you find the information you need. Don't hesitate to ask for help from the experts!

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# **APPENDIX: CASE STUDIES AND EXERCISES**



## DISCLOSING AND PREDICTING

### Objectives

- To explore the accuracy of first impressions
- To examine the basis on which we form first impressions
- To practice active listening skills
- To examine how getting to know someone through an open exploration of shared and differing values helps to change first impressions and bring perceptions more into line with reality

### Background

Using stereotypes, particularly stereotypes based on superficial first impressions, may sometimes help us to reach quick and efficient conclusions about people. More often, any efficiencies are severely and negatively undermined by lack of accuracy. Decisions made about people, based on first impressions or superficial observations, limit the potentials of both the observer and the observed.

Use of this exercise will help you examine the assumptions you make about others, as well as the assumptions people make about you. As you go through the exercise, you and your partner may find that your predictions about one another's attitudes and beliefs become more accurate. This generally comes about as a result of your ability to elicit more than just a minimum amount of information about your partner, thus increasing your knowledge and understanding of him or her. This means asking questions and carefully listening to the answers.

### Instructions

#### *1. (Dyads—10 minutes)*

Select a partner, preferably someone you don't know very well.

Do the following:

- Tell your partner one pertinent fact about yourself. This will form one basis for your first impression.

- Rank how you feel about each of the statements on the attached list on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 signifying total disagreement and 10 signifying total agreement. Enter your answers in the column headed “Your Ranking.” Do not discuss your rankings until told to do so. Be careful not to look at your partner’s rankings; this is not a contest, and there are no right or wrong answers.

2. (*Dyads—5 minutes each question*)

Using the same scale, predict the number you believe your partner will assign to statement one. Enter that ranking in the column headed “Prediction of Partner’s Ranking.” Remember, predict your partner’s ranking for the first statement only!

When each partner has predicted his or her partner’s response, do the following:

- Enter your partner’s ranking in the column headed “Partner’s Ranking.”
- Find the numeric difference between the score you predicted and your partner’s actual ranking.
- Enter that number in the column headed “Difference Between Prediction and Partner’s Actual Ranking.”
- Discuss why you believed your partner would respond as you predicted.
- Discuss why you ranked the statement the way you did. After five minutes, go on to the next statement. Continue through the list, one statement at a time, discussing each one before continuing.

### Questions for Consideration

1. On what did you base your predictions on the earlier questions? How did this differ from the basis for your predictions on later questions? (If you and your partner got worse in predicting, or failed to improve as you went along, why do you believe that happened?)
2. Is using first impressions to judge someone inherently bad, or can there be advantages? What might these be?
3. What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of retaining first impressions? What are the advantages and/or disadvantages of moving beyond first impressions?
4. What tools do you have for reaching beyond first impressions? How can they best be used?



## Work and Score Sheet

Topic	Your Ranking	Prediction of Partner's Ranking	Partner's Ranking	Difference Between Prediction and Partner's Actual Ranking
Sexual harassment is a common problem.				
Sports teach democratic values.				
A college degree is my ticket to success.				
I exercise regularly.				
I can talk to my parents about anything.				
I am politically conservative.				
I am careful about handling money.				
Dorm rules are in the best interests of students.				
Grades are important to me.				
I have a temper that shows.				
I have a hard time confronting my friends.				
I am comfortable participating in class discussions.				
I believe in life after death.				
Abortion on demand is the right of every woman.				
I consider myself to be very intelligent.				
I give money to homeless people.				
High schools should distribute condoms.				
Religion has done more harm than good.				
Sometime capital punishment is legitimate.				
Too much emphasis is placed on physical appearance.				

Total Disagreement	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Disagreement
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Remember, complete your discussion on each item before moving on to the next.

## OBSERVE AND PREDICT

### Objectives

- To explore the bases on which we judge other people
- To examine the way we stereotype people based on observational data
- To examine the benefits and dangers of stereotyping
- To examine how we use labeling to reinforce stereotypes
- To consider organizational issues that arise from stereotyping

### Background

Most of us are unaware of the assumptions or judgments we make about one another. Applying such assumptions or judgments to whole classes of people is called stereotyping. We all do it, learning our stereotypes in early childhood from family, friends, teachers, the media, and so forth.

Various departments of the U. S. government have developed stereotyped profiles to help them decide such things as whose tax returns should be audited and who is most likely to be carrying illegal drugs through customs. In doing so, the government is making assumptions about people based on such characteristics as their jobs, their income level, or their looks. Issuers of credit cards also use stereotypes to develop profiles of people who might be poor credit risks. We use stereotypes to order our lives and make them more manageable. We use them to decide whom to believe and whom to trust.

Think for a minute about what assumptions you would make about a woman who has brightly colored dyed hair, speaks with a foreign accent, and wears oversized jewelry and micro-mini skirts? That was the description in *The Wall Street Journal* article of the woman who turned around a faltering major international consulting firm and brought it back to staggering profitability.

The late African-American actress, Ethel Waters, related in her autobiography her experience of being heckled as she admired an expensive full-length mink coat in the window of a New York furrier. To the astonishment of those who had taunted her with racial epithets, Ms. Waters walked into the store and walked out moments later—wearing the coat! Her hecklers clearly had made certain assumptions about her based on her race.

In another publicized incident, a young man went to a fancy building in the posh section of a city to inquire about renting an apartment. The rental agent gave him a brief glance, informed him that she did not rent to students, and walked away. What she saw—and probably

based her judgment on—were his youthful face, his jeans, and his sweatshirt. She didn't see his \$80,000 Porsche parked outside, nor did she take the time to learn that he is part owner of a multi-million dollar business, as well as being a genuinely nice guy.

In this exercise, you will have a chance to explore how you stereotype people and consider the ways in which those stereotypes affect your interactions with people.

### Instructions

#### 1. (10 minutes—full class)

In class discussion, develop a list of about thirty things you first notice about people by using senses of sight, hearing, smell, and touch. Some examples might be hair color and clothing.

#### 2. (10 minutes—full class)

Draw two lines down the center of a piece of paper. Label the left column "Observations," the middle column "Generalizations," and the right column "Specific Stereotypes."

Using the list of observations developed in Step 1, develop a list of about twenty generalizations you might make about a person based on combinations of these items. For example, you might make a generalization about a person's intelligence based on their hair color and their clothing.

Enter the combinations of observations in the left column and the generalizations in the middle column.

#### 3. (10 minutes—full class)

Based on the list generated in response to Question 2 above, develop a list of specific stereotypes you might hold about people and the names you give to people who fit that description. (Sometimes it helps to start with the label and work backwards.) For example, you may conclude that a blond in a miniskirt has low intelligence and is thus a "bimbo."

### Questions for Discussion

1. In what ways were you surprised by some of the stereotypes you and your classmates hold?
2. In what ways, if any, can stereotyping be useful?
3. In what ways, if any, can stereotyping be harmful?
4. In what ways, positive or negative, do you feel you are stereotyped? How do you feel this has affected your life? How do you think this will affect your ability to get a good job and succeed in your career?
5. Discuss the implications of stereotyping for hiring, task assignment, productivity, expectations, management methods, etc., in the workplace.

## **CROSSING THE CHICAGO HIGHWAY\***

### **Objectives**

- To explore the impact of personality on human interaction
- To examine how knowledge of another's personality aids in communicating and negotiating
- To examine how knowledge of one's own personality aids in communicating and negotiating
- To consider the usefulness of personality analysis

### **Background**

Communicating effectively is the key to most successful interactions in the work place and beyond. Poor communication can present a serious stumbling block to working together and to managing conflict.

Too often, poor communication stems from variations on and misunderstandings of personality and personal style. If you are aggressive and outgoing, and you assume that others are as well, it may be natural to misinterpret the quiet slinking away of a coworker in the face of a disagreement. That coworker's message may be, "I am uncomfortable with confrontation, and I need time to think things over before I start to discuss the problem." Instead, you may interpret your coworker's response as an aggressive act meant to insult, and you may race after him or her, becoming angry and yelling. What is really happening is that you are failing to recognize that the two of you respond differently to the same stimulus.

By understanding your personality, and by becoming aware that others have different personalities, you may begin to understand why you and others react the various ways you do. This understanding can give you an edge in communicating, dealing with conflict, and negotiating. One personality test, the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)<sup>®</sup>, may help you do this. For this reason, the MBTI and similar tests are increasingly used in organizational settings.

In the following exercise, you will be given background information on the personalities of two individuals loosely based on the profiles that an MBTI test might reach. The MBTI provides you with information about four aspects of your personality: how you are energized; how you learn; how you evaluate situations; and your need for time and routine in your life.

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### *How you are energized*

The MBTI suggests that extroverts and introverts gain energy in two different ways—*extroverts* by the outer world of people and things, and *introverts* by the inner world of ideas and contemplation. *Extroverts*, according to this test, speak quickly, sometimes even before thinking, and their verbose styles often make them appear to take charge. *Introverts* prefer to study the facts before speaking, don't appreciate interruptions, and may appear to be slow to understand a situation or what they are being told.

### *How you learn*

If you base your decisions largely on theory and instinct, the MBTI would label you as *intuitive*. If you rely more on data and fact, then you are characterized as *sensing*. *Intuitives* want to see the big picture: They generally view details and facts as insignificant to the main theme. *Sensing* types are likely to rely heavily on facts and tend to mistrust theoretical or imaginative ideas. Giving them lots of facts and details will earn their approval.

### *How you evaluate situations*

If you evaluate situations objectively, with logic and rationality, then the MBTI would label you as a *thinker*. *Feelers*, on the other hand, tend to base their decisions primarily on values and on subjective evaluation of person-centered concerns. *Thinking* types look for efficient and logical resolutions. *Feeling* types are far more concerned with the results of an outcome on peoples' feelings.

### *Your need for time and routine in your life*

According to the MBTI, people who like a planned and organized approach to life and prefer to have things settled are *judgers*. Conversely, *perceivers* like a flexible and spontaneous approach to life and keep their options open. *Judging* types keep detailed daily schedules and stick to them at all costs: Order is of absolute importance. *Perceiving* types are more concerned about the quality of a decision or an event, not its completion.

It's important to remember that we all have the capacity to use all eight preferences. Those we use most often tend to become recognized as our dominant personality type. Once you are aware of your type and the types of others, your style of communicating and approach to negotiation may become sharper and more strategic.

## **Instructions**

### *1. (10 minutes)*

Briefly review the background information given above to be sure you are familiar with the terminology used by the MBTI in describing personalities.

Next, read following story: Chris Jones, a manager in the Project Controls Division of the Chicago Highway Construction Authority, has just hung up from the seventh telephone call he has received in two weeks from Lee Cohen. Cohen, Ward 11 supervisor, told Jones in very loud tones that his constituents are leaning on him to say exactly when the current highway construction is going to be out of their neighborhoods. Construction has been going on in the Ward 11 neighborhoods for the last four months, and it has caused considerable noise, dirt, and irritation.

Jones estimates that the work will continue for at least nine months more, maybe longer. The truth is, he doesn't really know for sure. Unfortunately, the *Chicago Star* reported that it would be no more than five months, and Cohen keeps reminding Jones of that.

Cohen has demanded an exact answer from Jones, and he has requested a meeting in a few days to discuss the project. Jones knows that Cohen is on the Environmental Impact Statement Committee that could greatly influence his group's work schedule, possibly further delaying completion of the project or stopping parts of it altogether. In addition, Cohen is pressuring Jones to hire 20 college students from his Ward as summer interns.

Jones knows he can't afford to alienate the public, especially since there has already been some tough criticism of his project in the *Star* and around town. A number of protests and challenges by various interest groups have continued to plague the project, sometimes even bringing the work to a halt. Jones doesn't want to set a precedent of backing down in all confrontations with community groups.

Jones's several phone conversations with Cohen, plus what his friends have told him, have helped him develop a sense of Cohen's personality. From what he has learned, Jones has concluded that Cohen is extroverted, intuitive, feeling, and perceiving. This is difficult for Jones who considers himself to be introverted, sensing, thinking, and judging.

Jones has asked you to help him plan just how he should go about conducting the meeting with Cohen.

## 2. (20 minutes)

Working in a group of three to five participants, discuss the following:

- a. What do you believe will be the main issues on which Cohen will focus?
- b. How do you believe Cohen will present his interests and concerns?
- c. Based on what you know of Jones's and Cohen's personalities, what problems do you foresee them having during their meeting?
- d. What recommendations do you have for Jones on how he should conduct himself during the meeting?

Select a spokesperson to report your group's conclusions to the class.

## 3. Report out and discussion (open-ended)

## THE DINNER PARTY

### Objectives

- To reflect on the numerous dimensions of diversity
- To consider the conflicting interests and needs of diverse populations
- To explore the meaning of diversity in interpersonal relationships
- To explore the challenges and benefits of diverse work populations

### Background

You have invited the following people to a small dinner party tomorrow evening at your new apartment:

1. Your uncle Jack, a cattle rancher from the big island of Hawaii, who has always given you very lavish gifts. Whenever you've visited him, he has served great steaks and roast beef.
2. Uncle Jack is bringing his nine-year-old daughter, by a second marriage, who throws temper tantrums when she has to eat vegetables.
3. A female graduate student, Gitanjali, from Madras, India. Gita lives in an elegant apartment nearby, and she wears magnificent silk saris. You believe she is Hindu.
4. Howard Ben Zadik, from Passaic, New Jersey, a classmate whom you like and want to know better. Howie always wears a small skullcap with Hebrew letters on it.
5. Linda, a school friend who spends most of her free time working for Greenpeace, Save the Whales, and other environmental causes. Linda was diagnosed with childhood diabetes at age ten and always carries insulin and a test kit.
6. Your favorite high school teacher, now retired, who you'd really like to impress. Your teacher always had boxes of Godiva chocolates and ate them constantly. Since leaving high school, you have learned that your teacher is a recovered alcoholic who is very active in A.A.

You have decided to serve a multi-course meal which will include hors d'oeuvres, entrée, at least three side dishes, and dessert, plus beverages before, with, and after the meal.

**Instructions**1. *(30 minutes)*

Working with three to five classmates, review the background information on each of your dinner guests. Come to a consensus on (a) what will you specifically avoid serving, and why; (b) what you will serve, and why?

Use the worksheet that follows to detail your answers.

2. *(5 minutes per group)*

Report your menu to the rest of the class, and explain the rationale for each of the food selections you will offer.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. In dealing with the conflicting interests and needs of your dinner guests, did you determine that the interests and needs of one or more of your guests should take precedence? Which ones, and why?
2. In determining the menu, what feelings (e.g., sympathy, impatience, etc.) did you experience towards specific guests? Why do you think you had those feelings? Were you more or less sympathetic or patient with guests whose needs and interests are similar to your own? What about those whose needs and interests are different from your own?
3. What advantages can you identify in entertaining a group having diverse needs and interests? What disadvantages? Compare this experience to dealing with diverse needs and interests in the workplace.
4. Consider that each of your invited guests represents a number of coworkers (e.g., a group of recovered alcoholics, a group of first-generation immigrants, etc.) instead of friends and relatives, and your task is to plan the company's annual outing. What will you do differently? Why?



**The Dinner Party — Worksheet**

<i>What to avoid serving</i>	<i>Why avoid serving it?</i>

**The Dinner Menu**

<i>Course</i>	<i>What will be served?</i>	<i>Why?</i>
<i>Hors d'oeuvres</i>		
<i>Entrée(s)</i>		

*Continued on the following page*

### The Dinner Party — Worksheet (Cont'd)

<i>Course</i>	<i>What will be served?</i>	<i>Why?</i>
<i>Side dishes</i>		
<i>Dessert(s)</i>		
<i>Beverages</i>		
<i>before dinner</i>		
<i>with dinner</i>		
<i>with dessert</i>		



## THE CULTURE QUIZ

### Objectives

- To stimulate awareness of cultural differences
- To promote consideration of the impact of cultural differences in a global economy
- To stimulate dialogue between domestic and international students
- To explore issues raised by culturally diverse workforces

### Background

Few, if any, traditions and values are universally held. Many business dealings have succeeded or failed because of a manager's awareness or lack of understanding of the traditions and values of his or her foreign counterparts. With the world business community so closely intertwined and interdependent, it is critical that managers today become increasingly aware of the differences that exist.

How culturally aware are you? Try the questions below.

### Instructions

Working alone or with a small group, answer the questions (without peeking at the answers). When you do look at the answers, be sure to read the explanations. If you are taking the quiz with students from other countries than your own, explore what the answer might be in your country and theirs.

1. In Japan, loudly slurping your soup is considered to be
  - a. rude and obnoxious.
  - b. a sign that you like the soup.
  - c. okay at home but not in public.
  - d. something only foreigners do.
2. In Korea, business leaders tend to
  - a. encourage strong commitment to teamwork and cooperation.
  - b. encourage competition among subordinates.
  - c. discourage subordinates from reporting directly, preferring information to come through well-defined channels.
  - d. encourage close relationships with their subordinates.



3. In Japan, virtually every kind of drink is sold in public vending machines except for
  - a. beer.
  - b. diet drinks with saccharin.
  - c. already sweetened coffee.
  - d. soft drinks from U.S. companies.
4. In Latin America, managers
  - a. are most likely to hire members of their own families.
  - b. consider hiring members of their own families to be inappropriate.
  - c. stress the importance of hiring members of minority groups.
  - d. usually hire more people than are actually needed to do a job.
5. In Ethiopia, when a woman opens the front door of her home, it means
  - a. she is ready to receive guests for a meal.
  - b. only family members may enter.
  - c. religious spirits may move freely in and out of the home.
  - d. she has agreed to have sex with any man who enters.
6. In Latin America, businesspeople
  - a. consider it impolite to make eye contact while talking to one another.
  - b. always wait until the other person is finished speaking before starting to speak.
  - c. touch each other more than North Americans do under similar circumstances.
  - d. avoid touching one another as it is considered an invasion of privacy.
7. The principal religion in Malaysia is
  - a. Buddhism.
  - b. Judaism.
  - c. Christianity.
  - d. Islam.
8. In Thailand
  - a. it is common to see men walking along holding hands.
  - b. it is common to see a man and a woman holding hands in public.
  - c. it is rude for men and women to walk together.
  - d. men and women traditionally kiss each other on meeting in the street.
9. When eating in India, it is appropriate to
  - a. take food with your right hand and eat with your left.
  - b. take food with your left hand and eat with your right.
  - c. take food and eat it with your left hand.
  - d. take food and eat it with your right hand.
10. Pointing your toes at someone in Thailand is
  - a. a symbol of respect, much like the Japanese bow.
  - b. considered rude even if it is done by accident.
  - c. an invitation to dance.
  - d. the standard public greeting.

11. American managers tend to base the performance appraisals of their subordinates on performance, while in Iran, managers are more likely to base their performance appraisals on
  - a. religion.
  - b. seniority.
  - c. friendship.
  - d. ability.
12. In China, the status of every business negotiation is
  - a. reported daily in the press.
  - b. private, and details are not discussed publicly.
  - c. subjected to scrutiny by a public tribunal on a regular basis.
  - d. directed by the elders of every commune.
13. When rewarding an Hispanic worker for a job well done, it is best not to
  - a. praise him or her publicly.
  - b. say “thank you.”
  - c. offer a raise.
  - d. offer a promotion.
14. In some South American countries, it is considered normal and acceptable to show up for a social appointment
  - a. ten to fifteen minutes early.
  - b. ten to fifteen minutes late.
  - c. fifteen minutes to an hour late.
  - d. one to two hours late.
15. In France, when friends talk to one another
  - a. they generally stand about three feet apart.
  - b. it is typical to shout.
  - c. they stand closer to one another than Americans do.
  - d. it is always with a third party present.
16. When giving flowers as gifts in Western Europe, be careful not to give
  - a. tulips and jonquils.
  - b. daisies and lilacs.
  - c. chrysanthemums and calla lilies.
  - d. lilacs and apple blossoms.
17. The appropriate gift-giving protocol for a male executive doing business in Saudi Arabia is to
  - a. give a man a gift from you to his wife.
  - b. present gifts to the wife or wives in person.
  - c. give gifts only to the eldest wife.
  - d. not give a gift to the wife at all.

18. If you want to give a necktie or a scarf to a Latin American, it is best to avoid the color
  - a. red.
  - b. purple.
  - c. green.
  - d. black.
19. The doors in German offices and homes are generally kept
  - a. wide open to symbolize an acceptance and welcome of friends and strangers.
  - b. slightly ajar to suggest that people should knock before entering.
  - c. half-opened suggesting that some people are welcome and others are not.
  - d. tightly shut to preserve privacy and personal space.
20. In the area that was formerly West Germany, leaders who display charisma are
  - a. not among the most desired.
  - b. the ones most respected and sought after.
  - c. invited frequently to serve on boards of cultural organizations.
  - d. pushed to get involved in political activities.
21. American managers running businesses in Mexico have found that by increasing the salaries of Mexican workers, they
  - a. increased the numbers of hours the workers were willing to work.
  - b. enticed more workers to work night shifts.
  - c. decreased the number of hours workers would agree to work.
  - d. decreased production rates.
22. Chinese culture teaches people
  - a. to seek psychiatric help for personal problems.
  - b. to avoid conflict and internalize personal problems.
  - c. to deal with conflict with immediate confrontation.
  - d. to seek help from authorities whenever conflict arises.
23. One wedding gift that should not be given to a Chinese couple would be
  - a. a jade bowl.
  - b. a clock.
  - c. a basket of oranges.
  - d. shirts embroidered with dragon patterns.
24. In Venezuela, New Year's Eve is generally spent
  - a. in quiet family gatherings.
  - b. at wild neighborhood street parties.
  - c. in restaurants with horns, hats, and live music and dancing.
  - d. at pig roasts on the beach.
25. If you order "bubble and squeak" in a London pub, you will get
  - a. two goldfish fried in olive oil.
  - b. a very cold beer in a chilled glass, rather than the usual warm beer.
  - c. Alka Seltzer® and a glass of water.
  - d. chopped cabbage and mashed potatoes fried together.

26. When a stranger in India wants to know what you do for a living and how much you earn, he will
  - a. ask your guide.
  - b. invite you to his home and, after getting to know you, will ask.
  - c. come over and ask you directly, without introduction.
  - d. respect your privacy above all.
27. When you feel you are being taken advantage of in a business exchange in Vietnam, it is important to
  - a. let the anger show in your face but not in your words.
  - b. say that you are angry, but keep your facial expression neutral.
  - c. not show any anger in any way.
  - d. end the business dealings immediately, and walk away.
28. When a taxi driver in India shakes his head from side to side, it probably means
  - a. he thinks your price is too high.
  - b. he isn't going in your direction.
  - c. he will take you where you want to go.
  - d. he doesn't understand what you're asking.
29. In England, holding your index and middle fingers up in a vee with the back of your hand facing another person is seen as
  - a. a gesture of peace.
  - b. a gesture of victory.
  - c. a signal that you want two of something.
  - d. a vulgar gesture.

### Answers to "The Culture Quiz"

1. b. Slurping your soup or noodles in Japan is good manners in both public and private. It indicates enjoyment and appreciation of the quality. (source: Eiji Kanno and Constance O'Keefe, *New Japan Solo*, Japan National Tourist Organization: Tokyo, 1990, p. 20.)
2. b. Korean managers use a "divide-and rule" method of leadership that encourages competition among subordinates. They do this to insure that they can exercise maximum control. In addition, they stay informed by having individuals report directly to them. This way, they can know more than anyone else. (source: Richard M. Castaldi and Tjipyanto Soerjanto, "Contrasts in East Asian Management Practices." *The Journal of Management in Practice*, 2:1, 1990, pp. 25–27.)
3. b. Saccharin-sweetened drinks may not be sold in Japan by law. On the other hand, beer, a wide variety of Japanese and international soft drinks, and so forth, are widely available from vending machines along the streets and in buildings. You're supposed to be at least 18 to buy the alcoholic ones, however. (source: Eiji Kanno and Constance O'Keefe, *New Japan Solo*, Japan National Tourist Organization: Tokyo, 1990, p. 20.)



4. a. Family is considered to be very important in Latin America, so managers are likely to hire their relatives more quickly than hiring strangers. (source: Nancy J. Adler, *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*, 2nd ed., PWS-Kent: Boston, 1991.)
5. d. The act, by a woman, of opening the front door, signifies that she has agreed to have sex with any man who enters. (source: Adam Pertman, "Wandering No More," *Boston Globe Magazine*, June 30, 1991, p. 10 ff.)
6. c. Touching one another during business negotiations is common practice. (source: Nancy J. Adler, *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*, 2nd ed., PWS-Kent: Boston, 1991.)
7. d. Approximately 45 percent of the people in Malaysia follow Islam, the country's "official" religion. (source: Hans Johannes Hoefer, ed., *Malaysia*, Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1984.)
8. a. Men holding hands is considered a sign of friendship. Public displays of affection between men and women, however, are unacceptable. (source: William Warren, Star Black, and M.R. Priya Rangsit, eds., *Thailand*, Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1985.)
9. d. In India, as in many Asian countries, toilet paper is not used. Instead, water and the left hand are used, after which the left hand is thoroughly cleaned. Still, the left hand is considered to be polluted and therefore inappropriate for use during eating or touching another person. (source: Gitanjali Kolanad, *Culture Shock! India*, Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company: Portland, Oregon, 1996, p. 117.)
10. b. This is especially an insult if it is done deliberately, since the feet are the lowest part of the body. (source: William Warren, Star Black, and M.R. Priya Rangsit, eds., *Thailand*, Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1985.)
11. c. Adler suggests that friendship is valued over task competence in Iran. (source: Nancy J. Adler, *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*, 2nd ed., PWS-Kent: Boston, 1991.)
12. b. Public discussion of business dealings is considered inappropriate. Kaplan, et al. report that, "the Chinese may even have used a premature announcement to extract better terms from executives," who were too embarrassed to admit that there was never really a contract. (source: Frederic Kaplan, Julian Sobin, Arne de Keijzer, *The China Guidebook*, Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1987.)
13. a. Public praise for Hispanics and Asians is generally embarrassing because modesty is an important cultural value. (source: Jim Braham, "No, You Don't Manage Everyone the Same," *Industry Week*, February 6, 1989). In Japan, being singled out for praise is also an embarrassment. A common saying in that country is, "The nail that sticks up gets hammered down."
14. d. Though being late is frowned upon in the United States, being late is not only accepted but expected in some South American countries. (source: Lloyd S. Baird, James E. Post, and John F. Mahon, *Management: Functions and Responsibilities*, Harper & Row: New York, 1990.)

15. c. Personal space in most European countries is much smaller than in the United States. Americans generally like at least two feet of space around themselves, while it is not unusual for Europeans to be virtually touching. (source: Lloyd S. Baird, James E. Post, and John F. Mahon, *Management: Functions and Responsibilities*, Harper & Row: New York, 1990.)
16. c. Chrysanthemums and calla lilies are both associated with funerals. (source: Theodore Fischer, *Pinnacle: International Issue*, March–April 1991, p. 4.)
17. d. In Arab cultures, it is considered inappropriate for wives to accept gifts or even attention from other men. (source: Theodore Fischer, *Pinnacle: International Issue*, March–April 1991, p. 4.)
18. b. In Argentina and other Latin American countries, purple is associated with the serious fasting period of Lent. (source: Theodore Fischer, *Pinnacle: International Issue*, March–April 1991, p. 4.)
19. d. Private space is considered so important in Germany that partitions are erected to separate people from one another. Privacy screens and walled gardens are the norm. (source: Julius Fast, *Subtext: Making Body Language Work*, Viking Penguin Books: New York, 1991, p. 207.)
20. a. Though political leaders in the United States are increasingly selected on their ability to inspire, charisma is a suspect trait in what was West Germany, where Hitler's charisma is still associated with evil intent and harmful outcomes. (source: Nancy J. Adler, *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*, 2nd ed., PWS-Kent: Boston, 1991, p. 149.)
21. c. Paying Mexican workers more means, in the eyes of the workers, that they can make the same amount of money in fewer hours and thus have more time for enjoying life. (source: Nancy J. Adler, *International Dimensions of Organizational Behavior*, 2nd ed., PWS-Kent: Boston, 1991, pp. 30 and 159.)
22. b. Psychological therapy is not an accepted concept in China. In addition, communism has kept most Chinese from expressing opinions openly. (source: James McGregor, "Burma Road Heroin Breeds Addicts, AIDS Along China's Border," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 29, 1992, p. 1.)
23. b. The Chinese regard a clock as a bad omen because the word for clock, pronounced *zhong*, is phonetically similar to another Chinese word that means the end. Jade is highly valued as symbolizing superior virtues, and oranges and dragon patterns are also auspicious symbols. (source: Dr. Evelyn Lip, "Culture and Customs." *Silver Kris*, February 1994, p. 84.)
24. a. Venezuelans do the reverse of what most people in other countries do on Christmas and New Years. On Christmas, they socialize. While fire works are shot off on both nights, most restaurants are closed, and the streets are quiet. (source: Tony Perrottet, ed., *Venezuela*, Houghton Mifflin: Boston, 1994, p. 97.)

25. d. Other popular pub food includes Bangers and Mash (sausages and mashed potatoes), Ploughman's lunch (bread, cheese, and pickled onions), and Cottage pie (baked minced meat with onions and topped with mashed potatoes). (source: Ravi Desai, ed., *Let's Go: The Budget Guide to Britain and Ireland*, Pan Books: London, 1990, p. 83.)
26. c. Indians are generally uninhibited about staring at strangers and asking them about personal details in their lives. Social distance and personal privacy are not common social conventions in India. (source: Frank Kusy, *India*, The Globe Pequot Press: Chester, Conn., 1989, p. 27.)
27. c. Vernon Weitzel of the Australian National University advises never to show anger when dealing with Vietnamese officials or business people. Showing anger causes you to lose face and is considered rude. Weitzel also recommends always smiling, not complaining or criticizing anyone, and not being inquisitive about personal matters. (source: Daniel Robinson and Joe Cummings, *Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia*, Lonely Planet Publications: Australia, 1991, p. 96.)
28. c. What looks to Westerners like a refusal is really an Indian way of saying "yes." It can also express general agreement with what you're saying or suggest that an individual is interested in what you have to say. (source: Gitanjali Kolanad, *Culture Shock! India*, Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company: Portland, Oregon, 1996, p. 114.)
29. d. In England, this simple hand gesture is considered vulgar and obscene. In a report to *The Boston Globe*, an American who had been working in London wrote, "I wish someone had told me before I emphatically explained to one of the draftsmen at work why I needed two complete sets of drawings." (source: "Finger Gestures Can Spell Trouble," *The Berkshire Eagle*, January 26, 1997, p. E5.)





## WHO TO HIRE?

### Objectives

- To explore participants' cultural biases and expectations
- To examine cultural differences
- To consider the impact culture has on hiring decisions

### Instructions

#### *Step 1 (10–15 minutes)*

Read the background information and descriptions of each of the applicants. Consider the job and the cultures within which the individual to be hired will be operating. Rank the candidates from 1 to 5, with 1 being your first choice, and enter your rankings on the ranking sheet in the column marked "My Ranking." Briefly list the reasons for each of your rankings.

Do not discuss your rankings with your classmates until told to do so.

#### *Step 2 (30–40 minutes)*

Working with three to four of your classmates, discuss the applicants, and rank them in the order of group preference. Do not vote.

Rank the candidates from 1 to 5, with 1 being the group's first choice, and enter your group's rankings on the ranking sheet in the column marked "Group Ranking." Briefly list the reasons for each of the group's rankings.

If your group represents more than one culture, explore the ways in which each person's cultural background may have influenced his or her individual decisions.

#### *Step 3 (open-ended)*

Report your rankings to the class, and discuss the areas of difference that emerged within your group while you were trying to reach consensus.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Was your group able to explore openly any culturally-based biases that came up—for example, feelings about homosexuality, religion, personality traits, politics?
2. Did you make any comments or observations that you feel would have been fully acceptable in your own culture but were not accepted by the group? Explain.

3. If the answer to Question 2 was yes, how did the reaction of the group make you feel about your membership in it? How did you handle the situation?
4. What implications do you believe these cultural differences would have in business dealings?

## **Background**

You are a member of the management committee of a multinational company that does business in twenty-three countries. While your company's headquarters are in Holland, your offices are scattered fairly evenly throughout the four hemispheres. Primary markets have been in Europe and North America; the strongest emerging market is the Pacific Rim. Company executives would like to develop what they see as a powerful potential market in the Middle East. Sales in all areas except the Pacific Rim have shown slow growth over the past two years.

At present, your company is seeking to restructure and revitalize its worldwide marketing efforts. To accomplish this, you have determined that you need to hire a key marketing person to introduce fresh ideas and a new perspective. There is no one currently in your company who is qualified to do this, and so you have decided to look outside. The job title is "vice-president for international marketing"; it carries with it a salary well into six figures (US\$), plus elaborate benefits, an unlimited expense account, a car, and the use of the corporate jet. The person you hire will be based at the company's headquarters and will travel frequently.

A lengthy search has turned up five people with good potential. It is now up to you to decide whom to hire. Although all the applicants have expressed a sincere interest in the position, it is possible that they may change their minds once the job is offered. Therefore, you must rank them in order of preference so that if your first choice declines the position, you can go on to the second, and so on.

## **Applicants**

### **Park L., age 41, married with three children**

Park L. is currently senior vice-president for marketing at a major Korean high technology firm. You have been told by the head of your Seoul office that his reputation as an expert in international marketing is outstanding. The market share of his company's products has consistently increased since he joined the company just over fifteen years ago. His company's market share is now well ahead of that of competing producers in the Pacific Rim.

Mr. Park started with his present company immediately after his graduation from the University of Seoul and has worked his way up through the ranks. He does not have a graduate degree. You sense that Mr. Park has a keen understanding of organizational politics and knows how to play them. He recognizes that because the company he works for now is family controlled, it is unlikely that he will ever move much higher than his present situation. Mr. Park has told you that he is interested in the growth potential offered at your company.

In addition to his native tongue, Mr. Park is able to carry on a reasonably fluent conversation in English and has a minimal working knowledge of German and French. His wife appears quiet and quite traditional, and his children speak only Korean.

**Kiran K., age 50, widow with one adult child**

Kiran K. is a Sikh woman living in Malaysia. She began her teaching career while finishing her DBA (doctorate in business administration) at the Harvard Business School and published her first book on international marketing ten months after graduation. Her doctoral dissertation was based on the international marketing of pharmaceuticals, but she has also done research and published on other areas of international marketing.

Two months after the publication of her book, Kiran went to work in the international marketing department of a Fortune 500 company, where she stayed for the next ten years. She returned to teaching when Maura University offered her a full professorship with tenure, and she has been there since that time. Her academic position has allowed her to pursue a number of research interests and to write authoritative books and papers in her field. At present, she is well published and internationally recognized as an expert on international marketing. In addition, she has an active consulting practice throughout Southeast Asia.

You have learned through your office in Kuala Lumpur that Kiran's only child, a twenty-three-year-old son, is severely mentally and physically disabled. You sense that part of her interest in the job with your company is to have the income to guarantee his care should anything happen to her. Her son would go with her to Holland, should she be given the job, where he will need to be enrolled in special support programs.

In addition to fluency in Malay, English, and Hindi, Kiran speaks and writes German and Spanish and is able to converse in Japanese and Mandarin.

**Peter V., age 44, single**

Peter is a white South African. He had worked in a key position in the international marketing division of an American Fortune 100 company until the company pulled out of his country eight months ago. While the company wanted to keep him on, offering to move him from Johannesburg to its New York headquarters, Peter decided that it was time to look elsewhere. He had begun to feel somewhat dead-ended in his position and apparently sees the position at your company as an opportunity to try out new territory. Like your other candidates for the position, Peter has a long list of accomplishments and is widely recognized as outstanding in his field. People in your company who have had contacts with him say that Peter is creative, hard working, and loyal. In addition, you have been told that Peter is a top-flight manager of people who is able to push his employees to the highest levels of performance. And, you are told, he is very organized.

Peter has a Ph.D. in computer science from a leading South African university and an MBA from Purdue's Krannert School of Business.

Peter had been a vehement opponent of apartheid and is still very much a social activist. His high political visibility within South Africa had made his life there difficult, and even now, with the end of apartheid, he would like to get out. His constant male companion, P.K. Kaahn, would be coming with him to Holland, and Peter would like your personnel office to help P.K. find an appropriate position.



Peter speaks and reads English, Dutch, Afrikaans, and Swahili and can converse in German.

**Tex P., age 36, divorced with one child**

Tex is currently job hunting. His former job as head of marketing for a single-product high technology firm—highly specialized workstations for sophisticated artificial intelligence applications—ended when the company was bought out by Texas Instruments. Tex had been with his previous company virtually from the time the company was started six years earlier. Having to leave his job was an irony to Tex as it was largely due to the success of his efforts that the company was bought out. You sense that he is a little bitter, and he tells you that jobs offered to him by TI were beneath him and not worthy of consideration.

Tex has both his undergraduate and MBA degrees from Stanford University. In addition, he was a Rhodes Scholar and won a Fulbright scholarship, which he used to support himself while he undertook a two-year research project on the marketing of high-technology equipment to Third World countries.

You have learned through your New York office that Tex has a reputation for being aggressive and hard driving. Apparently he is a workaholic who has been known to work eighteen to twenty hours a day, seven days a week. He seems to have little time for his personal life.

In addition to his native English, Tex has a minimal command of French—which he admits he hasn't used since his college days.

**Zvi C., age 40, married with five children**

Zvi began his career after receiving his MBA from the Sloan School of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). His first job was as marketing manager for a German company doing business in Israel.

Zvi's phenomenal success with this company led to his being hired away by an international office equipment company in England. Again, he proved to be outstanding, boosting the company's market share beyond all expectations within two years. After five years, Zvi was offered a chance to go back to Israel, this time to oversee and coordinate all the international marketing programs for an industrial park of fourteen companies run as an adjunct to Israel's leading scientific research institution. It has been his responsibility to interface the research component with product development and sales as well as to manage the vast marketing department. Again, he has shown himself to be a master.

You have learned through your Haifa office that Zvi is highly respected and has extensive contacts in the scientific and high-tech worlds. He is exceptionally creative in his approach to marketing, often trying bold strategies that most of his peers would dismiss as too risky. Zvi, however, has made them work and work well.

Zvi is a religious man who must leave work by noon on Friday. He will not work Saturdays nor any of his religion's major and minor holidays—about eighteen a year. He will, however, work on Sundays. In addition to his native language, Dutch (Zvi and his family moved to Israel from Holland when Zvi was six), he speaks and writes fluent Hebrew, English, German, and Arabic.



## Ranking Sheet

*Rank candidates from one to five with one as your first choice.*

<i>Applicant</i>	<i>My Ranking</i>	<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Group Ranking</i>	<i>Reasons</i>
Park L.				
Kiran K.				
Peter V.				
Tex P.				
Zvi C.				

## **FREDERICK INTERNATIONAL\***

In July of 1979, Gordon Frederick and Lewis Naehring, president and vice-president, respectively, of Frederick Engineering in Brookfield, Connecticut, decided to form a new division of their safety products company. The goal of the new division, Frederick International, would be to broaden the market for the company's main product, the Proxagard, a high-tech safety device, beyond the borders of the United States.

The Proxagard is used in such manufacturing equipment as punch presses. Punch presses are extremely dangerous. Around the world, many punch press operators have lost parts of fingers and hands when they have become careless and have allowed their hands to get in the path of the powerful machines. As a result, the punch press industry, and operators of hazardous equipment as well, were getting slapped with lawsuits when employees lost fingers or suffered other damage to their hands. In addition, OSHA, which regulates occupational safety and health in the United States, has the power to fine a company if an inspection or complaint reveals that the organization is jeopardizing the well-being of employees.

By electromagnetically sensing fingers when they come dangerously close to a press, the Proxagard provides customers with a fail-safe method of preventing injuries and does so at a competitive price. Another plus for the Proxagard is that help with installing and servicing this device is just a phone call away for customers in the United States. As companies have begun to see the rising costs of workers' compensation and costs associated with defending themselves against liability claims, they have started to weigh the bottom-line costs and benefits of safety equipment such as the Proxagard. In the United States, Frederick had been selling seven hundred to nine hundred of the safety devices per year.

Frederick's first sale to a foreign customer had been in September of 1976. Lapin Industrielle, a large company that specialized in importing American equipment, had seemed like a promising sales representative for the fledgling company. Frederick and Naehring were surprised and delighted when Lapin bought thirty Proxagards, which, at that time, cost about \$450 each. All were installed in a company that used dozens of punch presses.

In addition to buying thirty Proxagards, Lapin Industrielle helped Frederick's cause by beginning the process of obtaining the necessary federal approval for the product in France. Without government approval, a product was supposedly not allowed to be sold in France. The early model of the Proxagard—the PG 101—that Lapin had purchased, had not received approval. Unlike OSHA in the United States, French federal inspectors have the authority to shut down a plant if equipment is considered unsafe. Lapin had installed the thirty Proxagards at the punch press company without telling anyone, so it was especially important that they keep up their efforts to gain federal approval. At this point, however, Lapin had lost

\* This case was written by Scott Weighart.

interest in continuing to seek approval. As Frederick's engineers refined and improved a new PG 110 model of the Proxagard—that did eventually receive approval—Lapin did very little.

“We told Lapin that they had to get one salesman completely committed to the Proxagard,” Frederick's sales people contended, “but they told us that they didn't have the resources to send one man out to sell and install the Proxagards to ensure they would pass inspection.”

In early 1979, Rick Knackert, a navigator for Fresh Airlines and a personal friend of Frederick's, met salesman Pierre Vachon during a trip to Brussels. Upon hearing Knackert describe Frederick Engineering's Proxagard, Vachon was intrigued and extremely confident that he could sell a high volume of the devices.

Then came a curious turn of events: Vachon injured his back and was ordered to bed by his doctors for six weeks of rest. As Vachon was a workaholic, this was something he wouldn't take lying down—even if he was flat on his back. Vachon had his wife set up a Proxagard and its sensing antenna at the foot of his bed. For weeks, he experimented with the device by wiggling his toes around to determine the size of the sensing field. He also read every piece of sales literature and other information that Frederick could provide for him.

After spending six weeks in bed with the product, Vachon had fallen in love. Back on his feet, he began new negotiations for getting the French government's approval, and he was successful. Then in 1985, Vachon met Jean-Claude Laperrière, who, on seeing the Proxagard in action, also became a devotee of the product. Laperrière was a tinkerer who loved to build gadgets and toy with new ideas. He had recently separated from his wife and was more than happy to go around the countryside installing Proxagards and building antennas that were perfectly tailored to each customer's needs.

Meanwhile, a French federal inspector discovered the thirty Proxagards that Lapin had quietly installed seven years earlier.

“What is this thing?” the inspector had demanded to know. “Who sells this?” After learning that the machines had been working for years without failures or accidents, he became fascinated by the device. He eventually traced the product to Frederick Engineering and to Laperrière and Vachon.

Suddenly all the pieces began to come together for Frederick International. When the French inspector found unsafe equipment, he would threaten to close down the plant and recommend a call to Pierre Vachon. By now, Frederick was charging \$700 for the Proxagard, but Vachon and Laperrière could sell it for the equivalent of \$2,500 to French companies, plus a charge for Laperrière's meticulous installations. This was steep compared with the American price, but consistent with prices charged by companies that made optical scanners or light curtains, which perform roughly the same function as the Proxagard but with different technology.

Laperrière installed between 125 and 150 Proxagards; he had made a great deal of money doing what he liked. Likewise, Vachon had earned substantial commissions, while Frederick had profited as well.

Since Frederick International's first venture was so successful, Lewis Naehring was very excited when the possibility for a similar arrangement in Japan arose. Mitsui Products, a maker of safety equipment in Japan, expressed serious interest in the Proxagard. Mitsui made



palm buttons and light curtains for protecting punch presses: Palm buttons force the machine operator to keep both hands away from the path of the press; light curtains are similar to electric eyes. However, some of Mitsui's applications could only be carried out with something like the Proxagard.

Unlike Europe—where worker safety is a reasonable priority—some observers believe that Japanese claims of placing a high priority on safety are weakly supported by barely enforced standards. In comparison with the United States, Japan has far fewer lawyers per capita, and employee lawsuits are extremely rare.

"If an accident occurs, the individual is considered stupid for letting it happen," Naehring says. "Also, unions are not powerful because Japan is still largely a caste society and the socialized medical system covers any costs from injuries."

As was the case with France, government approval of the Proxagard had to be obtained, and while the approval processes were similar, it soon became clear that the Japanese government disapproved of imports unless it was proved that no comparable product could be built domestically.

When Naehring went to Japan's Department of Labor to secure approval, the official he spoke with got right to the point: "In selling your Proxagard in our country, are you attempting to replace light curtains?"

"No," Naehring replied. "This is for other applications."

"Good," the official replied. "Now the meeting can continue."

As he had once done with Lapin Industrielle, Naehring told Mitsui's executives that it would be crucial to find a person who could be an antenna design expert and who would make a full commitment to the project. The Mitsui president and engineers consistently said yes to whatever Naehring raised.

"Would you send your antenna expert to the United States for training?" Naehring asked. His question was met with vigorous nods of agreement. Naehring was led to believe that twenty to twenty-five Proxagard orders per month would be possible.

A few months later, a Mitsui official came to Connecticut and expressed much enthusiasm for the project. That was in 1988. Since then, however, the Mitsui connection has resulted in very few orders for Proxagards, an average of fewer than fifty per year.

Through correspondence and occasional phone calls, Naehring tried to figure out what was going wrong.

"Are you really making an effort to sell these things?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "But we have not sold many yet, although we remain hopeful."

When he tried to determine if they had really followed through by assigning a person to travel the country, Naehring received a vague and roundabout letter in return, stating that Mitsui officials were taking appropriate action to ensure success in their mutual endeavors.

Today, Naehring remains unclear as to why the product is so successful in America and France but has failed to meet expectations in Japan. Was it really Mitsui's fault? Should Frederick sink some money into advertising in Japan? Would Frederick International be successful in Japan with a different partner? In the maze of government regulation, cultural



differences, workers' compensation, and competition, Naehring couldn't be sure exactly where Frederick International had gone down the wrong path. He assumed that companies across the world would want to protect their workers from accidents with the best available technology, so it must be something else that went wrong.

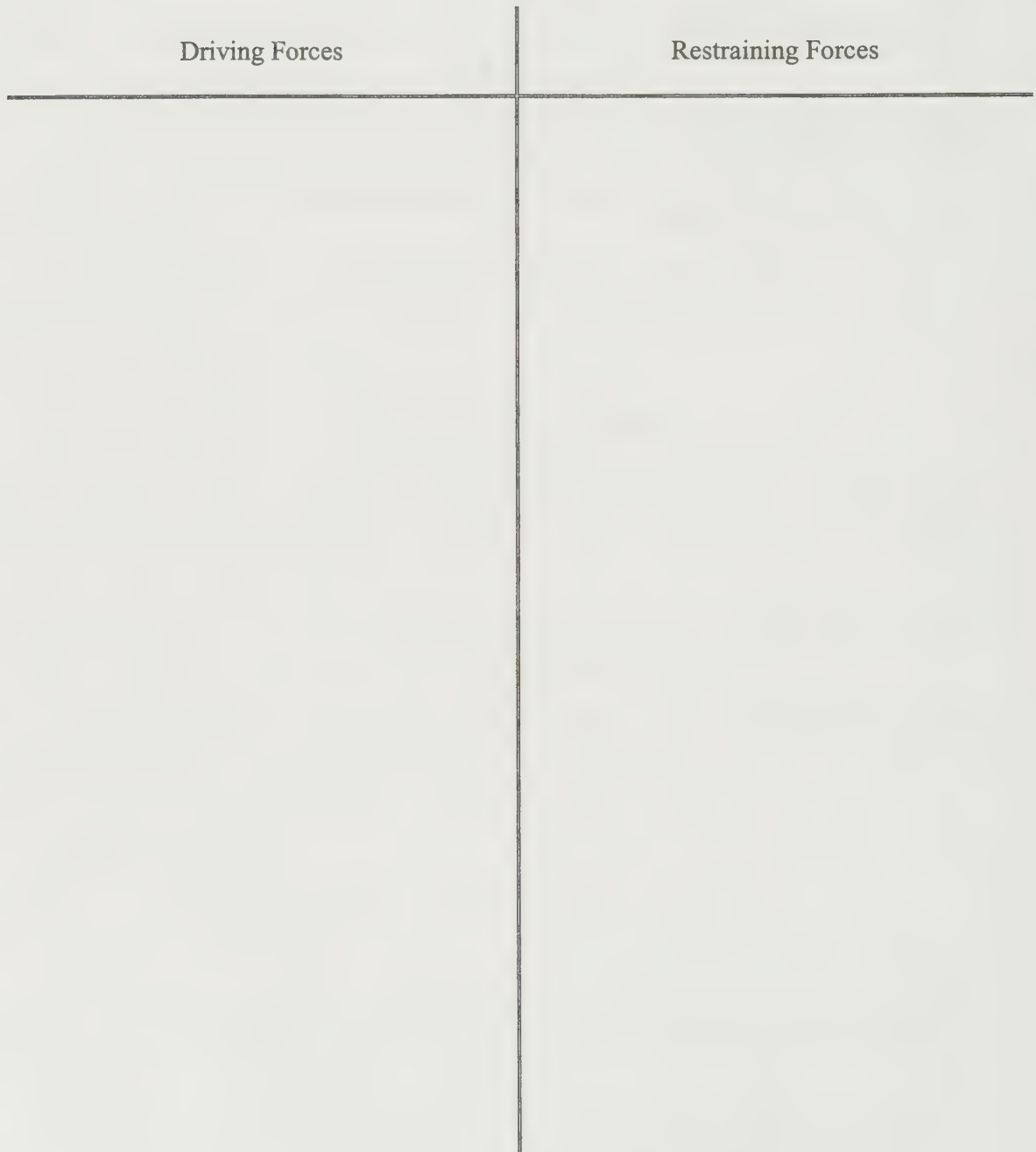
### Questions for Discussion

1. What has kept Frederick International from being as successful in Japan as it has been in the United States and France? Would finding a different Japanese representative be a good idea?
2. Do you believe it is possible to make Frederick International more successful and profitable in Japan? How?
3. What overall advice would you give Frederick and Naehring for making Frederick International more successful?

## Force Field Analysis

Add arrows as necessary.

## Goal: Successful Sales of Proxagards in the United States



## Force Field Analysis

Add arrows as necessary.

**Goal: Successful Sales of Proxagards in Japan**

Driving Forces

Restraining Forces

A large empty cross-shaped diagram for Force Field Analysis. It consists of a horizontal line and a vertical line intersecting at the center. The horizontal line is labeled 'Driving Forces' on the left and 'Restraining Forces' on the right. The vertical line is unlabeled. The diagram is intended for users to add arrows and text to analyze the forces affecting the goal.

## Force Field Analysis

Add arrows as necessary.

**Goal: Successful Sales of Proxagards in the France**

Driving Forces	Restraining Forces



## WHAT YOU SEE ISN'T NECESSARILY WHAT YOU GET

### Objectives

- To examine the relationship of perception to attribution
- To explore the impact of selective perception
- To examine the link between perception and behavior

### Background

You have just checked into a hospital room in anticipation of having minor surgery tomorrow. When you get to your room, you are told that the following people will be coming to speak with you within the next several hours:

1. The surgeon who will do the operation
2. A nurse
3. The secretary for the department of surgery
4. A representative of the company that supplies televisions to the hospital rooms
5. A technician who does laboratory tests
6. A hospital business manager
7. The dietician

You have never met any of these people before and don't know what to expect.

About half an hour after your arrival, a woman who seems to be of Asian ancestry appears at your door dressed in a straight red wool skirt, a pink and white striped polyester blouse with a bow at the neck, and red medium-high-heel shoes that match the skirt. She is wearing gold earrings, a gold chain necklace, a gold wedding band, and a white hospital laboratory coat. She is carrying a clipboard.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Of the seven people listed, which of them is standing at your door? How did you reach this conclusion?
2. If the woman had not been wearing a white hospital laboratory coat, how might your perceptions of her have differed? Why?
3. If you find out that she is the surgeon who will be operating on you in the morning, and you initially thought she was someone different, how confident do you now feel in her ability as a surgeon? Why?

**Instructions***Step 1 (individually: 5–10 minutes)*

Read the situation to yourself, and decide who it is that is standing at your door and why you believe it to be that person. Make some notes as to your rationale for eliminating the other possibilities and selecting the one that you did.

*Step 2 (small groups: 10–20 minutes)*

Working in small groups or with the class as a whole, discuss who might be standing at your door and why you believe it to be that person.

In a place visible to all, reproduce the grid found with this exercise, and use it to record the responses of class members.

*Step 3 (open-ended)*

In class discussion, consider the stereotypes used to reach a decision, and consider the following:

1. How hard was it to let go of your original beliefs about each individual?
2. What implications do perceptions of people have about how you treat them and the expectations you have of them?
3. What implications do your responses to the above questions have to the way you, as a manager, might treat a new employee? What will the impact be on that employee?
4. What are the implications for yourself in terms of job hunting, relationships to peers, subordinates, and superiors in the workplace?

## What You See Isn't Necessarily What You Get Decision Grid

On the grid below, list the reasons that the woman standing before you  
is or is not each of the following individuals.

Take a class vote, and list the number of people who select each possibility.

<i>Possibilities</i>	<i>Why the woman is/is not this person</i>	<i># who believe this to be the case</i>
Surgeon		
Nurse		
Secretary		
Television Representative		
Laboratory Technician		
Business Manager		
Dietician		

## OPERATION TRANSPLANT Part 1

### Objectives

- To explore decision making under conditions of uncertainty and complexity
- To practice the skills of group decision making by consensus
- To help participants explore the values and beliefs they hold that impact their interactions with others

### Background

You are a member of the Ethics and Policy Committee of a medium-size urban hospital and teaching facility. Your committee is charged with making decisions about research proposals and innovative medical procedures. When resources are short, the committee must also decide which patients will receive special services. This last responsibility usually leaves you with the uncomfortable feeling that you are being asked “to play God.” You are painfully aware that many patients who are not selected for special services face almost certain death.

This is exactly the case before you now. Five patients in your hospital have been recommended by your hospital’s surgical transplant team as having the physical and psychological stamina necessary for a liver transplant operation. Without liver transplants, *all* of them will die within three to six months. With a transplant, their individual chances for survival range from about 80 to 85 percent. Under the best possible circumstances, that is, if five matching livers become available fairly rapidly, you might be able to save all five patients. The greatest likelihood is, however, that you will save up to three at most.

It is impossible to know just when a liver will become available. When one does, it will be on such short notice that it is important to have decided in advance in what order the patients are to be considered for the operation. Because all the patients are critically ill, it is conceivable that one or more could die before a liver becomes available, or that one or more could develop complications from their diseases that could render them unacceptable as transplant candidates. If either of these possibilities comes about for the individual who is Number One on the priority list, your transplant team needs to know immediately which patient will be moved in to take his or her place. Because any number of the patients could become unacceptable, you need to establish the order in which you will consider the five patients for transplant.

The transplant team has given you histories on each of the patients, including their personal and family backgrounds. You must consider the information and make your decisions. Your committee should discuss each candidate and reach a consensus (based on discussion



rather than voting) as to who will be first, second, third, fourth, and fifth in line for this life-saving operation.

### Instructions

#### 1. (5 minutes)

Before rank ordering the candidates, do the following:

- a. List three to five personal values you feel are important in making this decision (for example, "Children's lives are more important than adults.").

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- b. List three to five responsibilities you feel you have been charged with fulfilling (for example, "To be fair").

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#### 2. (15 minutes)

When you have finished, carefully read the descriptions of each of the transplant candidates; then enter your personal rankings in the column headed "My Ranking" on the grid found at the end of the exercise.

## Candidates

### **Sandra T., age 34, Asian, Methodist**

Sandra is a registered nurse with three children, all under nine. She had worked the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift at your hospital for six years until four months ago when her illness became too severe. The money she had been earning, and her willingness to work the night-to-morning shift, allowed her husband, Charles, a full-time paralegal in a major law firm, to pursue a law degree at a local night law school. Over the past four months, Charles has had to stop his law school classes (in which he was consistently earning top grades) to care for Sandra and the children. During the day, home health aides assist Sandra. Charles drops the youngest child off at day care and drives the two older children to school on his way to work. He leaves work at lunch time to pick the older children up and take them to the day care provider; in the evening, he picks them up. There are few community support services available to the couple. Sandra is an only child whose parents had her rather late in life; both have been dead for over ten years. Charles has one married brother, but he lives in another city 700 miles away, as do his parents who, themselves, are not well.

When Sandra and Charles were married almost a dozen years ago, they were full of high hopes. Charles had just graduated from a major university with a degree in business and had taken his job with the law firm, initially in their bookkeeping department. Sandra had graduated from the nursing school of the same university. They have both been active in their church, and Sandra organized a support group for young mothers in their community.

Now Sandra is scared and depressed. She is increasingly upset with the realization that her illness has drained their young family both financially and emotionally, and she worries about her children and the impact her illness is having on them. Sandra prays that she will be considered to be a viable candidate for a liver transplant so that she and Charles can continue to raise their family and share the love they feel so deeply for one another.

### **Sara Y., age 42, white, Jewish**

Sara, an English professor at a local university, is popular with students, has won the school's award for excellence in teaching, and consistently receives highest evaluations for her courses. She is a member of the Democratic Women's Caucus and The League of Women Voters, and she is an abortion rights activist.

Last April, Sara received both good news and bad news on the same day: Her first book won a national writers' award, and she was diagnosed as having sclerosing cholangitis of the liver. She is currently on leave from teaching, as her illness has left her physically exhausted, unable to concentrate, and in need of almost constant hospitalization.

Sara grew up in a middle-class family in the Midwest. She received her undergraduate degree from an eastern women's college, a master's degree in English from Stanford and, just after she turned 24, she settled into the role of housewife, having married her high school sweetheart. At age 29, she became a widow when her husband died in a plane crash. She was

left with three young children. A substantial settlement from the airline allowed her to live comfortably, care for her children, and return to school for a Ph.D. in English literature, which she completed in five years. During her Ph.D. program, Sara met and married a history professor fifteen years her senior. A widower, he had four children, two of whom are now students at the university, a sophomore and a senior respectively. The oldest child has completed college and works in Vermont on an experimental farm; the youngest is still in high school. Sara's children are also still in high school. The couple adopted one another's children, creating what Sara calls "sort of a Jewish Brady Bunch." Sara's second husband died suddenly two years ago when he had a heart attack during his tenure hearings.

"My work isn't over," says Sara. "I know I'm not the only one in the world who can teach English and write books. That's something I do for me, something I feel good about. But I am the only one left for seven terrific kids, and they just don't deserve this."

### **Peter V., age 27, white, no religion stated**

Peter is a college drop-out who has never held a steady job. His father, a board member of your hospital, has been particularly useful in helping the hospital weave its way through local red tape and politics. Peter's father has also been a major donor and an invaluable fundraiser. His efforts have been critical to the continued operation of the surgical transplant unit which year after year incurs an enormous operating deficit, with costs for care of liver transplant patients, for example, ranging up to \$250,000 per case. Even now, the unit operates under the constant threat of being closed for lack of funds.

Unlike his very generous father, Peter is arrogant, demanding, and entitled. During his multiple admissions to your hospital over the past four months, he has angered much of your staff. His nurse call button always seems to be on, but the nurses complain that when they respond, his demands are for channel changes on his television, pillow adjustments, and other petty requests. In addition, many staff members say they're uncomfortable with the steady stream of questionable characters who visit Peter's room night and day.

You have known Peter since he was a small child, when he was sweet, bright, fair-haired and lively. All that changed as Peter entered adolescence, and you're aware that Peter was suspended several times from the posh private school he attended for coming to classes drunk. Each time, his father pressured the school to take him back. Ultimately he graduated, although you suspect he was given "social passes" to get him through without alienating his parents. Peter went on to a local two-year college, and for a time things looked better. However, he flunked out mid-way through the second year and has neither gone back nor gotten any sort of job. His parents, who continue to be his sole support, tell you that they will never abandon their son and that they believe their love will ultimately bring him around. Between his admissions to the hospital, Peter lives in his parents' home.

Peter's father appears dispirited by Peter's medical condition. Peter's mother, however, is angry and seems to hold the hospital responsible for every ache and pain her son is suffering. She has stated openly to members of her various clubs that if Peter does not receive a liver, she and her husband will "stop all financial support and see to it that the hospital is made to pay for its negligence."



**Chris J., age 37, white, Methodist**

Chris holds a Ph.D. in biology and worked on a research team at a biotech firm until two months ago when health complications made further work impossible. Scientists at the biotech firm believe that, thanks in large part to a major breakthrough by Chris, they are close to developing a drug intervention for use when AIDS is diagnosed at an early stage. The profits from such a drug potentially would be enormous. Largely on the strength of Chris's work, the firm has been able to raise considerable capital and two government grants to continue the investigation and drug development.

You've had a recent visit from the CEO of the biotech firm, a personal friend and former member of your hospital's staff, who came to plead on Chris's behalf. "Without Chris," the CEO told you, "we would not be as close to a cure for AIDS as we are. We're on the edge here of being able to save thousands of lives, and Chris is important to us."

Chris has been in a stable, same-sex "marriage" for thirteen years with Pat, a social worker for a local "safe house" for battered women. Chris and Pat have established a home in the suburbs, and Chris's elderly mother lives with them. (Chris's father was an alcoholic who disappeared when Chris was nine.) They have been active in their community where they are socially popular and accepted by most, although by no means all, of their neighbors. A year ago Chris and Pat co-chaired their community's successful Red Feather charity drive.

As a scientist, Chris is philosophical about the likelihood of a liver transplant. "Life is so fragile and uncertain," says Chris. "I see that everyday in the laboratory. I desperately want to live because I think I have a lot to contribute, but I also know that I could walk across the street and get hit by a car. Who ever knows?"

**Jean-Paul D., age 34, Haitian, Catholic**

Jean-Paul arrived in the United States in 1994 on an overcrowded boat from Haiti. Reaching shore sick and exhausted after seventeen days at sea without adequate food or water, he asked for and received political asylum.

Although he was an engineer in his native country, after receiving his green card, Jean-Paul took the first job he could find, as a mechanic's assistant. Until he was hospitalized, he had been scrupulously saving every possible penny in the hope of one day bringing his wife and four young children to the United States and to safety.

While in Haiti, Jean-Paul had been arrested and imprisoned for political agitation. Although he admits to occasionally criticizing the current regime in private discussions with his friends, he contends that he made a point of being apolitical in public to avoid trouble for himself and his family. Daily beatings while in prison left him with both emotional and physical scars.

Before his hospitalization, Jean-Paul had been living in a two-bedroom apartment with nine other Haitian men, all of whom had left families behind. Jean-Paul is especially concerned about his fourteen-year-old son, who will likely be a target for military conscription, or worse, for arrest and torture. Without help from Jean-Paul, his wife and children have little possibility of getting out of Haiti, where conditions are worsening daily. "I have to live," he says, in his limited and heavily accented English. "I am their only hope."



## OPERATION TRANSPLANT Part 2

Once you have completed your individual ranking of the candidates for the liver transplant, you will be asked to join with a group of your classmates to arrive at a group ranking.

### Instructions

#### 1. (5–10 minutes)

Before rank ordering the candidates, do the following:

- a. Using the personal lists that you developed in Part 1, Step 1a, list below the three values that were most listed by group members.

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- b. Using the personal lists that you developed in Part 1, Step 1b, list below the three responsibilities that were most listed by group members.

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#### 2. (40–45 minutes)

Working in your group, discuss the candidates and rank order them. Enter your rankings on the grid in the column labeled “Group Ranking.” Do not vote. Instead, reach consensus through discussion.

#### 3. Select a group spokesperson to report your decisions to the class.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Were members of your group able to work cooperatively to arrive at a decision?
  - a. How did the individuals in the group deal with disagreement and conflict?
  - b. When someone in the group disagreed with you, how did you handle the disagreement?
  - c. Did you feel others listened to you?
  - d. Did you listen to others?
2. What criteria were used to arrive at a determination?
  - a. Were the criteria uniformly applied?
  - b. If not, what do you see as the implications of not using uniform criteria here and in the workplace?
3. In what ways were your values and belief systems similar to and different from those of your classmates? To what do you attribute this?
  - a. In what ways did your agreed-upon values and responsibilities influence your decision making?
  - b. In what ways do you believe your values and belief systems will impact how you treat people in the workplace?

### Scoring Grid

Patient	My Ranking	Group Ranking	Comments/Reasons
Sandra T.			
Sara Y.			
Peter V.			
Chris J.			
Jean-Paul D.			





## PICKING THE PROJECT TEAM AT THE OZARK RIVER BANK

### Objectives

- To examine the human resources needs, including personalities and expertise, to successfully undertake and complete a project
- To consider the impact of personal values and group norms on group functioning
- To consider other relevant factors in assembling a high functioning team

### Instructions

1. *(Individually: 15 minutes)*

As you read the background information on each candidate, highlight or underline the job requirements you believe should be considered in selecting the three team members. Develop a list of the qualities and expertise the candidates should have, individually and collectively, to be part of the team.

As you read the profiles on each of the candidates, similarly mark the information, positive and negative, that will lead you to decide to use or not use that candidate for your team.

2. *(Small group: 30 minutes)*

Discuss the project, the team requirements, and the candidates' strengths and weaknesses. Select the three team members.

3. *(15 minutes minimum)*

Report your decisions and the reasons for them to the class. Discussion to follow.

### Background

Two years ago, the Ozark River Bank, the largest commercial bank in a six-state area, became a major lender in a worker-led leveraged buyout. To finance the buyout, the workers pledged the assets of the company as collateral for their loans. Now it has become clear that the business plan on which the buyout was based is not meeting projections. Although the new owners have been able to turn the company around from a losing situation to one that is

marginally profitable, it is unlikely that cash flow will be sufficient to meet debt-service requirements when a large issue of zero-coupon bonds matures in about eighteen months.

The original worker buyout was a highly publicized event in which more than a thousand jobs were saved, financial disaster for a community was averted, and the bank was hailed for its assistance and support. To let the company go under because it is unable to meet its financial obligations on the loans would throw the community into a severe recession, increase joblessness, and put the bank in a bad light. Therefore, the bank needs to explore a creative plan for the workout in which the various lenders, including a group of other financial institutions that hold unsecured debt (debentures), and the stockholders (both management and the workers) arrange a restructuring that would reduce debt-service requirements consistent with current cash-flow projections. This could involve a variety of techniques, including the conversion of some debt into equity, salary reductions for management, and efficiency cuts in the workforce.

Dealing with this kind of situation is sensitive, high in stress, and severely time constrained. You have found that the most successful approach to doing this kind of work is to assign it to a project team. The job of the team will be to put together a restructuring plan that meets the needs of the bank and the other lenders and that can be put into place quickly at the time of default.

Five people in your department have the knowledge and ability to do the kind of work necessary. It is important that the three people you select for this team be high-functioning and successful. They must be able to work well together to accomplish the task accurately, quickly, and without delay. Your job is to decide which three will work best together to accomplish the stated objectives. The success of this team will be important to its members' career paths and to yours.

The following people in your department are available:

### **Harold, age 52**

Harold has been a loyal employee of the bank for twenty-six years. He is respected by his peers and his superiors, and he has a solid understanding of the industry involved. In addition, he has worked successfully on smaller but similar projects. Harold sets careful timelines for work in projects and pushes the members of his teams to be fastidious about meeting deadlines. Over the years, he has proven himself to be both a leader and a team player. Recently, Harold returned to the bank after a six-month medical leave of absence because of a heart attack. He is eager to get back into work and is actively looking for something to do.

### **Joan, age 41**

Joan is a detail person. She understands the fine points of leveraged buyouts and reorganizations better than anyone in your department and, when she is on a team, it is rare for there to be any loopholes or glitches in the results. Through hard work and determination, Joan has risen in the company fairly quickly. She is an outspoken feminist whose sexual harassment case against the bank, brought seven months ago as a reaction to a situation with a prior pro-

ject team, has still not been resolved. Apparently, the two men with whom she had been working used a great deal of locker-room language, persisting in this practice despite her objections. The previous manager of your department, your immediate predecessor, failed to take her complaints seriously.

### **Cynthia, age 31**

Cynthia is married and has two young children. She came to work in your department five and a half months ago, just after receiving her MBA, and is still learning the ropes. Her job before and during her MBA program was as a project manager with the company that is now the object of the workout. She was there throughout the leveraged buyout proceedings and had been part of the group that developed the original business plan. You had hired Cynthia to replace Harold, who you hadn't expected to return; however, some people also believe that she was hired specifically to undercut the credibility of Joan's case. For the last three months, Cynthia and Joan have been working together on a plan for an on-site day care program at the bank.

### **Jack, age 35**

Jack is a bachelor who likes to spend his free time at sporting events or at a local bar with his friends. Of all the people in your department, Jack is probably the most knowledgeable about workouts on complex loan defaults. He has an excellent reputation for being innovative, but he is also known to be a procrastinator—one of those people who likes to push deadlines, waiting until the last minute before he really gets going. Then, Jack works virtually round the clock, pushing his coworkers to do the same. In the end, he always seems to come through.

### **Joshua, age 62**

Joshua has an air of Old World chivalry and is very conservative about women. He has been outspoken in his belief that women belong at home taking care of their husbands and children, but he makes his comments with such charm that most people don't take offense. Having been at the bank for more than thirty years, and being an active member in the local community, Joshua knows just about everyone and has ready access to a wide range of resources. He knows how to work the system to get what he needs when he needs it. This kind of networking ability could prove to be an important factor in the ultimate success of this project.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. In what ways would the various people described work well together? In what ways might they have problems?
2. Given the answers to Question 1, which three people will you select, and why?



## MANAGING PERFORMANCE BY SETTING GOALS

### Objectives

- To examine the use of goal setting in performance management
- To practice the techniques of performance management

### Part A

#### Background

You are the parents of a teenager who, despite having above-normal intelligence, is doing poorly in high school. At present her grade point average is 1.3 on a four-point scale, and she is failing English and Social Studies. She has been getting into trouble in and out of school because of antisocial behavior. Her bedroom is a mess, and she is often late for school because she can't find clothes, books, etc. She has also lost her much-needed job for being late once too often. Your teen admits that she doesn't feel very good about herself and would like to change—but she feels overwhelmed.

You know from your college course in organizational behavior that setting clear and realistic goals is an important aspect of helping a person improve performance. You think you'll try this with your teen, starting with a performance evaluation.

#### Procedure

1. *(15 minutes)*

Working in a group of three to four classmates, decide what long- and short-term goals you should set with your teen to help her improve. Consider what you think would be a realistic schedule, and create a time-line along which you chart at least seven goals.

2. *(20 minutes)*

As a group, decide what you will do to help your teen achieve her goals, what you will do if she fails to achieve a goal, and what you will do when your daughter achieves a goal.

3. *(Optional 5–10 minutes each round)*

Select two people to role play the goal-setting conversation between parent and teen. After the role play, discuss how effective the conversation was and what could have been done better.



Next, select two people to role play the conversation between parent and teen when the teen fails to meet a goal. Discuss the effectiveness of this conversation.

Finally, select two people to role play the conversation between parent and teen when the teen has met a goal. Discuss this conversation as well.

4. *(10 minutes)*

As a group, explore what you see as the strengths of the goal-setting approach and how effective you think this approach would be with you. Consider what you see as the parallels between the use of goal setting with a family member and goal setting in the workplace.

5. *(5–10 minutes each group)*

Report your findings to the class beginning with showing your time-line. Share your reflections on the questions in #4.

## **Part B**

1. *(10–20 minutes)*

Working in the same group, have each group member briefly describe a situation in which they or someone they know needed to improve work performance. As a group, select one of the situations and discuss how the supervisor or manager could have used goal setting to help that individual.

2. *(5–10 minutes each round)*

Role play the situation, this time role playing the conversations between employee and manager, beginning with a performance evaluation and then following the instructions in Part A, Question 3 above.

## **Questions for Discussion**

1. Why do you feel goal setting would be a successful (or not so successful) technique to use in the workplace?
2. What do you see as management's responsibilities for helping employees set and meet goals? Why?
3. As you role played or observed the role plays of the stages of performance management, how comfortable were you with the conversations that took place? What might have been done to make the conversations more comfortable?

## THE WORKSTATION BONUS

### Objectives

- To consider the relationship of performance appraisal, feedback, and reward to motivation
- To consider the interdependency of team members
- To explore the difference between bonus rewards and salary

### Background

You are the manager of the high-technology department in an industrial design firm. Several months ago, your company decided to bid on a project to design the housing for a new generation of computer workstations to be based on the latest RISC technology. Realizing that this could ultimately turn into a million-dollar contract, you carefully selected two three-member teams and set them to work to design the prototype, giving each team the customer's specifications and the following clear instructions: the housing had to be designed quickly; it had to be high in quality and durability; it had to be aesthetically distinctive; and it had to be modular, cost-effective, easy to assemble and service, and easy to ship.

Yesterday, you were excited to learn that your company got the job. Your very happy CEO has authorized \$35,000 in bonus money for you to divide among your employees in any way you deem fair. You know that the way you give out the bonuses can have a serious impact on the morale and motivation of your employees and can affect their participation on future projects.

Knowing something about equity, expectancy, and other theories of motivation, and understanding the basic tenets of performance appraisal and feedback, you know that you have to have a clear basis for apportioning the bonuses. In addition, you know that this project would never have gotten done well and on time without a team approach.

The way you give out the bonuses may affect how well your employees work together in the future.

### Instructions

#### *Step 1 (20–30 minutes)*

Read the background information and the profiles of each of the team members as they appear below. Using the individual decision worksheet, list the amount of the bonus you would give to each and the reasons for your decision.

*Step 2 (40–60 minutes)*

Working in groups of five to seven students, discuss the problem and come to a group consensus on how the bonus money should be divided and why. It is useful to discuss the philosophy on which you will base your decision before making it.

*Step 3 (15–30 minutes)*

Report to the class how your group divided the bonus money and why. The instructor should record each group's response in a visible place.

*Step 4 (open-ended)*

Class discussion.

**Team A**

You had assigned the following people to Team A:

**Jennifer**

Jennifer had worked off and on for you on a part-time basis for five years. A divorced mother with two young children, it had been impossible for her to come on full-time until both of her children were in school. Jennifer began full-time this past September. You were pleased to hire her, because she is an unparalleled designer with a sense of the practical. Indeed, you weren't let down by her abilities on this project. Her initial sketches served as an excellent starting point and as the basis upon which the housing was ultimately designed. What did cause some problems, however, was that her children both came down with the chicken pox in the middle of the project, causing her to miss almost a full week at work. During that time, she came in nights, weekends, and whenever else she could find child care.

**Abdul**

Abdul is a true workaholic. Whenever you have assigned him to a project, he has worked virtually seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, until completion. This project was no different. Abdul is pretty much of a loner, and you're aware that he frequently made his teammates angry when he made changes to their design plans without consulting them. When confronted, Abdul always acted disgusted as he pointed out just why the changes were necessary; more often than not, his teammates grudgingly went along with him. Unfortunately, you ended up spending a lot of time putting out the emotional fires that Abdul regularly seemed to start. Abdul is a job hopper; he has been looking for another job since he started with your company just eight months ago.

**Hank**

Quiet, competent, and self-assured, Hank goes about his business as business. You wanted Hank on this team because he is stable and reliable. He isn't, however, particularly creative and innovative. What he does best is to take other people's ideas, refine them, and execute them. He is also an excellent model builder, and the models he produced for this project are meticulous. Hank rarely stays late or works overtime, unless absolutely pushed. Instead, he prefers to spend nights and weekends with his family and in community activities. He is very active in his church and occasionally gets calls during working hours from church members who have pressing questions. In the past, you have asked Hank to limit his nonbusiness telephone time. Over the course of this project, you have noticed that he has had few calls, and those he has had have been brief. Hank has been very understanding about Jennifer's problems and has done everything he can to help her out and cover for her.

**Team B**

You had assigned the following people to Team B:

**David**

When David first came to the company, you were concerned that he wouldn't work out. He had been fired from his previous job. You were told by a friend that it was for frequent absences; however, David tells you it was because his boss didn't like him. While he hasn't been absent very often since joining your department, he has come to work late on a regular basis. David never did very much actual work on this project, and he couldn't be counted on to meet deadlines; but he is the only person other than Jennifer who has the design expertise and an understanding of aesthetics necessary to do this job. He is a brilliant innovator, and he came up with some terrific ideas, a couple of which were incorporated into the final design. They may have been the reason that your company got the contract.

**Mei-Ling**

Mei-Ling is your most reliable materials expert, but she knows little about design. She selected the materials for the project's prototype, and Hank tells you that her ideas were brilliant. Thanks to Mei-Ling, the workstation is durable, lightweight, and can be broken down into modules for easy assembling, servicing, and shipping. You're not sure whether it is out of modesty or loyalty to her team that she tells you that she selected the materials based on David's suggestions and that she couldn't have chosen the correct materials without him. Mei-Ling has been excited about her project and about her team. She has asked that the three members be allowed to work together again on any upcoming projects.



**Maida**

Maida is one of those people who organizes things, gets after people to do their jobs, and picks up the pieces for others when they don't follow through. She generally does this without complaining, and she constantly praises those around her as knowing more and being more able than she is. On this latter point, she may be right—she isn't particularly brilliant or creative, but she is a plodder. So long as Maida is around, things get done and generally on time. When projects bog down or team members become upset with one another, Maida is there with support, homemade brownies, and occasionally a joke—she's a real team player. You put Maida on this team because you thought she would be able to offset some of David's irregularities, and that is exactly what she did. Maida, Mei-Ling, and David generally eat lunch together, and you have overheard them making weekend plans with one another on a number of occasions.

**The Results**

Team A finished their project in seven weeks. It was largely their design, combined with a few of Team B's innovations, that resulted in the company's winning bid. Team B had actually finished ten days earlier than Team A, but there were a number of small flaws in their design that resulted in its being rejected. The \$35,000 in bonus money is ready to be distributed. You suspect that giving everyone who worked on the project the same amount might be perceived as rewarding some questionable behaviors and failing to reward some other positive behaviors adequately.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. How much, if any, of the \$35,000 will you award to Team A? How will you divide the amount among Team A's members? Why?
2. How much, if any, of the \$35,000 will you award to Team B? How will you divide the amount among Team B's members? Why?
3. What do you believe the positive and negative effects on employee behavior and productivity, as individuals and as team members, will be as a result of the way you have allocated the bonus money?
4. Would it be possible and advisable to bring the team members into the decision-making process? How?

**Worksheet for Use in Individual Decisions**

1. List the general criteria on which you will base the bonus awards.

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2. How much will you give to each employee?

Abdul      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

David      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Hank      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Jennifer    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Maida      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Mei-Ling    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why?

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## Worksheet for Use in Group Decisions

1. List the general criteria on which you will base the bonus awards.

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2. How much will you give to each employee?

Abdul      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

David      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Hank      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Jennifer    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Maida      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

Mei-Ling    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ % of \$35,000 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why?

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**A STRAW IS A STRAW IS A STRAW—  
EXCEPT IN THE HANDS OF A HIGH-PERFORMANCE TEAM®**

**Objectives**

- To provide hands-on experience in the use of leadership to create a high-performance team
- To provide an opportunity to examine how a leader, formal or informal, conveys a clear vision and the ways that vision drives the execution of a task
- To provide an opportunity to examine the role of followers in achieving a leader's vision

**Background**

A leader who is able to convey a strong and clear vision of the goals and purposes of an organization has the best chance of developing groups of individuals into high-performing teams. It is the leader's role to provide a clear framework within which work is to be carried out and to build an environment in which individuals become committed to supporting one another and the organization's goals.

This exercise provides a hands-on experience that will allow you to study leadership in action. The learning from the exercise comes largely from your role as an observer, not just of the leader's behavior, but of the leader's impact on you and your motivation and commitment. To get the most out of this exercise, first read the "Questions for Consideration" and "What to Look For" below.

**Instructions**

A valued customer has asked you to design and build a model for the tallest, sturdiest, and most attractive office building possible. The building is to be built in a city where land is expensive and parking is a problem. Eventually a microwave tower will be erected on the roof, and you must provide for it.

Your customer has let you know that a number of other companies will be vying for the contract to build the actual building.

There are certain customer preferences and restrictions:

- At least 95 percent of the model must be constructed out of drinking straws.
- The model must be delivered by \_\_\_\_\_ (ending time will be given to you by the facilitator).
- The model must stand for at least one full minute after delivery.
- The customer dislikes triangles.

*1. (25 minutes)*

Select a leader. Once the leader has been selected, it is up to him or her to provide the subsequent instructions for how to continue.

When your model has been completed or time is called, whichever comes first, take a few minutes to jot down some answers to the “Questions for Consideration.”

*2. (15 minutes)*

Select someone other than the exercise leader to facilitate a discussion of the process you followed in building the model. Use the “Questions for Consideration” and “What to Look For” as a guide.

Select two spokespeople to communicate your observations to the class. Assign one the task of presenting your building and its features. The other should describe your process.

*3. (open-ended)*

There will be a report out and a class discussion when you have completed the exercise. During the report out you will have approximately four minutes to:

- Present your model.
- Briefly describe what your goal was as defined by your leader.
- Briefly describe how you went about carrying out your leader’s missions.
- Briefly describe one leadership behavior that worked well and one that didn’t.

**Questions for Consideration**

1. In what ways did the leader convey a vision and facilitate a shared understanding of the assigned task and approach?

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2. If you had been (or were) the leader, what would you have done differently, what would you have done the same, and why?

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3. For the followers, what worked, what didn't work, and why?

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**What to Look For**

- How the leader encouraged or discouraged input and participation
- How the leader determined and used the skills of each team member
- The emergence of an informal leader (someone other than the appointed leader) who set the goals and brought the group together
- Power struggles in which more than one person tried to take a leadership role, and the impact of that on the efficiency of the team
- Whether you felt valued, motivated, and part of the team

## TWO LEADERSHIP FISHBOWLS

### Fishbowl #1

#### Objectives

- To examine the elements of good and poor leadership
- To examine the participants' experiences with good and poor leadership
- To practice the important leadership skill of active listening

#### Procedure

##### 1. (20 minutes)

Five students will be selected randomly or by volunteering to be the “fish.” Sitting together in the middle of the class (or in a central place where they can be seen and heard by the other members of the class), the fish should tell the stories of their experiences with bad or good leaders, and then discuss them with the other members of the fish group only.

Students on the outside of the fishbowl are not to speak while the fish are speaking. Their job is to observe, listening for common threads as well as differences in what they are hearing. Those outside of the fishbowl should listen carefully but not take notes.

If there is a lag in the conversation, it is important for everyone, including the facilitator, to resist the temptation to jump in and help. It is not unusual for such lags to occur at the very beginning of the exercise and again before the onset of the general discussion that takes place among the fish after each has told his or her story.

Option 1: *Think about people for or with whom you have worked and who you felt were good leaders.*

Option 2: *Think about people for or with whom you have worked and who you felt were poor leaders.*

##### 2. (15–20 minutes, depending on size of group)

Going around the class, every student on the outside of the fishbowl should report on one thing that he or she has heard about the elements of leadership discussed by the fish. During this phase, the fish are not allowed to talk. These common elements should be listed in a visible place.



3. *(Full class: 10–15 minutes)*

When the observation list has been completed, exchange and general discussion between the fish and the observers may take place.

4. *(Small groups: 10–15 minutes)*

When the first four steps have been completed, the class should be divided into groups of five or six. If possible, there should be at least one fish in each group.

Working in these small groups, do one of the following:

Option 1: *Develop a twenty-five to fifty word definition of leadership that begins with the phrase "A good leader is..." and incorporates at least three to five elements of good leadership.*

Option 2: *Develop a list of the personal and interpersonal traits, skills, and abilities you would like to see in a leader.*

5. *(open-ended)*

Report your results to the class. Discussion should follow.

Option 1: *Drawing on what you have learned about leadership from personal experiences, readings, lectures, and the fishbowl exercise, discuss your ideas with the other members of your group, and together develop a definition of leadership in twenty-five to fifty words.*

Step a. *List the elements of good leadership you believe should be included in your definition.*

Step b. *Write a definition of leadership beginning with the words "A good leader is...."*

Option 2: *Drawing on what you have learned about leadership from personal experiences, readings, lectures, and the fishbowl exercise, discuss your ideas with the other members of your group, and together develop a list of the personal and interpersonal traits, skills, and abilities that you and your fellow group members would like to see in a leader.*

Briefly describe each item on your list, and explain why each is important personally and interpersonally.

## Fishbowl #2\*

### Objectives

- To observe the process of leadership as it emerges in a group discussion
- To examine the elements of poor and good leadership
- To practice the important leadership skill of active listening
- To explore cultural differences in how effective leadership is perceived

### Procedure

#### 1. *Set-up and debate (20 minutes: 5 minutes for set-up; 15 minutes for debate)*

You will be given a topic to debate for fifteen minutes. Six students will then be selected, either at random, or from volunteers, to debate each side of the issue (three on each side). These students will be the “fish” and will sit in a small circle in the center of the class (or in a central place where they can be seen and heard by the other members of the class). The fish will have fifteen minutes to debate the assigned topic, and they may only speak with the other fish.

Students on the outside of the fishbowl are not to speak while the fish are speaking. If you are one of these students, your job will be to observe the debate. You will be asked to comment on what you have observed regarding leadership, so listen carefully—but do not take notes.

Note: If there is a lag in the conversation, it is important for everyone, including the facilitator, to resist the temptation to jump in to help. It is not unusual for such lags to occur at the very beginning of the exercise and again before the onset of the general discussion that takes place among the fish after each has voiced his or her opinion.

#### 2. *Observations (15–20 minutes, depending on the size of the group)*

Going around the class, every student on the outside of the fishbowl should comment on one thing that he or she has observed with regard to leadership. During this part of the fishbowl exercise, the fish are not allowed to talk.

List the observations in a visible place.

#### 3. *Discussion of observations (5–10 minutes)*

When the observation list has been completed, exchange and general discussion between the fish and the observers may take place. The discussion should focus on the comments and observations made, not on renewing the debate.

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#### 4. *Class discussion of leadership observations (open-ended)*

Drawing from the comments made, a focused discussion of the elements of leadership should take place. Discussion points might include:

- Examining the issues of power and influence in the group as they relate to leadership.  
Who had the most influence? Why?  
Who talked the most?  
Who sounded most like an expert? Did that person have more or less influence?  
Why?  
Was anyone able to change or sway your opinion on the issue? Why
- Examining cultural differences.
- Examining the importance of active listening and its role in leadership.
- Examining the process of the discussion:  
Who started the discussion?  
How, or by whom was it determined who would speak and when?  
Did the fish listen to one another, talk over one another, or interrupt one another?

#### 5. *Small group exercise (10–15 minutes)*

When the first four steps have been completed, the class will be divided into groups of five or six. If possible, there should be at least one fish in each group.

Working in these small groups, do one of the following:

Option 1: *Develop a twenty-five to fifty word definition of leadership that begins with the phrase “A good leader is...” and incorporates at least three to five elements of good leadership.*

Option 2: *Develop a list of the personal and interpersonal traits, skills, and abilities you would like to see in a leader.*

#### 6. *Report out and discussion (open-ended)*

Report your results to the class. Discussion should follow.





## WHO WORKS SATURDAY NIGHT?

### Objectives

- To explore leadership styles—autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire
- To examine the effectiveness of the different styles in decision-making situations
- To examine the impact of leadership styles on subordinates

### Background

Autocratic leaders generally impose their decisions without considering the input of their subordinates. Laissez-faire leaders may relinquish their decision-making powers to their subordinates. Democratic leaders clarify the goals to be met by a decision and work with subordinates to find the decision that best meets those goals.

As you do this exercise, consider the leadership style being used by your group's manager and the ways in which you believe that style to be appropriate or not.

### The Story

Your small company, Turnem, Inc., a manufacturer of valves that have a wide variety of uses, including use in several aspects of the aerospace industry, is on a tight deadline to complete a project. The prototype product is due to be demonstrated to the leaders of the aerospace industry the following Monday.

To finish on schedule, it will be necessary for one member of your team to work on some of the highly technical parts of the project this Saturday evening, probably having to stay until at least midnight. The entire team will have to work at its most productive and cooperative level for the full day on Sunday. The budget allows for only one member of the team to be paid to work Saturday night.

The contract for this project, although not your company's only source of revenue, is important.

**Instructions***1. (10 minutes)*

Read the background information above, and the role that has been assigned to you in class. In addition, read the questions on the “Observer Sheet” and the “Questions for Discussion.”

Review and plan your role thoroughly. Think about how you will justify the position you will need to take with regard to working Saturday night. Do not discuss your role with any of your classmates until you have been told to do so.

*2. (30 minutes)*

In your work group, decide who will work Saturday night and why.

Select a spokesperson for your group to report to the rest of the class how your group solved the problem. Your spokesperson should also be prepared to describe the efficacy of the manager. Use the “Observer Sheet” and the “Questions for Discussion” as a guide.

*3. (10 minutes)*

Read the instructions on the “Score Sheet,” and rate your manager and your satisfaction with the decision according to the directions given.

*4. (30 minutes)*

Report out and discussion.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Given the problem presented, did the manager of your group use an appropriate leadership style? Why or why not? (If you were the manager in your group, how did you feel about the effectiveness of the leadership style you used?)
2. What do you think the manager should have done differently?
3. Did the manager listen to and consider each employee’s arguments?
4. How was the decision made? Did the manager elicit input from the employees?
5. What are the implications of the decision for each member? For the effectiveness of the team on Sunday? For the ultimate success and quality of the project?

### Observer Sheet

1. Briefly describe the manager's dilemma.

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2. Were the employees given a fair chance to explain their concerns?

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3. How would you rate the manager's overall listening skills and why?

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4. What factors do you think the manager failed to consider in making a decision?

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5. What factors did the manager appear to use in reaching a decision?

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6. How did the employees react to the manager's leadership style, and why?

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## Score Sheet

1. Working alone, rate your group manager on the following scale:

10	5	1
Autocratic	Laissez-Faire	Democratic

Calculate the average rating in your group (not counting the manager's opinion!) by adding all ratings and dividing by the number of workers in the group.

Group rating: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Working alone, rate your satisfaction with the decision on the following scale:

10	5	1
Very Dissatisfied		Very Satisfied

Calculate the average rating of satisfaction in your group by adding all the ratings and dividing by the number of workers.

Group rating: \_\_\_\_\_

Generally, groups that perceive their leaders to be autocratic will be more dissatisfied with decisions made about who works Saturday night. Laissez-faire managers can also be frustrating to groups. Keep in mind that this may vary depending on the composition of the group: Some people actually like to be told what to do. In some cultures, managers who involve workers in decision-making processes, such as those represented by this exercise, are considered to be ineffective; in other cultures, managers are expected to seek input from subordinates regularly. The occurrence of and acceptance of laissez-faire styles of management, however, tend to be rare compared to that of more autocratic styles.

### Questions for Discussion

1. How did your group feel about the style of your manager, and why?
2. In what situations would you consider autocratic leadership to be both appropriate and acceptable, and why?
3. In what situations would you consider laissez-faire leadership to be both appropriate and acceptable, and why?



## TROUBLE WITH THE TEAM PROJECT\*

### Objectives

- To develop skills in team problem solving
- To explore methods and styles of conflict resolution
- To examine the ways in which leaders influence group processes

### Background

The paper for your management class's team project is due early tomorrow morning. You and your teammates have been working on it for the past month, and you have spent many hours together over the past several days trying to agree on the final form and content.

Each of you has come to this meeting with the rough drafts of your individual parts of the paper. As you have come to expect from team projects in other classes, some parts are much "rougher" than others—some even fail to meet the agreed-upon two-page requirement. In addition, and despite your prior agreement that all work was to be typed, most of the drafts are hand-written.

It is now 2 p.m. on the day before the project is due. Several tasks need to be finished if you are going to hand in a high-quality paper, i.e., the paper needs to be written in a coherent form, integrated, typed, proofread, edited, polished, and the exhibits need to be created and added. You are now all present for the team meeting at which you must resolve how you will complete the paper by the time it is due tomorrow morning.

*Keep in mind that your team will need to work closely together again next week to put together a class presentation on the project.*

### Instructions

#### 1. (5 minutes)

Read the background information above, as well as the role that has been assigned to you, and carefully prepare what you will say to your group.

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## 2. (20–25 minutes)

Begin the role play by explaining to your team who you are and what you think your role should be in getting this paper done. After twenty-five minutes, stop the role play whether or not your team has reached a resolution.

## 3. (20 minutes)

Read the “Questions for Discussion” (below), and discuss the answers with your group. If your team failed to resolve the problem, use the questions as a guide to explore why this may have been your result.

**Questions for Discussion***Problem Solving*

1. On a step-by-step basis, describe how your team went about solving this problem.
2. Explain the process by which the paper will be completed. How did the team arrive at this decision?
3. Given this plan, what grade is the paper likely to get? Why?
4. Did the team focus on their common goals in trying to resolve the problem?

*Conflict*

5. How are the relationships among the team members? Does anyone feel angry, insulted, or upset with the team and/or the decision? Why?
6. Did the team arrive at a win/win decision? Win/lose? Lose/lose? Why?
7. What impact do you think the conflict is likely to have on future team performance, particularly preparing and delivering the final presentation?

*Leadership Style*

8. What style of leadership did your team leader demonstrate?
9. How did this style influence the team’s decision-making process?
10. Did anyone else on the team emerge as a leader? When? What impact did this have on the team’s ability to solve the problem?

## Observer Sheet

1. Describe the team leader's leadership style. Was it appropriate?

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2. What impact did it have on team interactions and motivation of team members?

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3. Who emerged as (an) informal leader(s)? When? Why?

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4. Was the team able to focus on common goals?

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5. What conflict-management strategies did you observe?

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6. What happened as those strategies were utilized? Did conflict subside or escalate?

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7. What conflict-management strategies might have been more helpful?

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8. Do you feel that the team was successful in resolving this problem? Why?

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9. Describe any other significant observations you made regarding leadership and conflict.

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## THE ELEVENTH HOUR: A FISH BOWL ROLE PLAY

### Objectives

- To explore the dynamics that make groups effective or ineffective
- To practice methods for dealing with various group dynamics

### Background

You have been assigned to a group in a class that requires a group project. The grade you receive for the project will be the same as every other member of your group.

You took the course partly because you had heard it was a terrific opportunity to learn about effective groups. From your own work experience, and from reading articles in business publications like *The Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes*, you know that the current business climate absolutely requires workers to be able to function effectively in groups.

As part of the project, you are required to keep a budget and make regular reports to the professor. If the financial reports have mistakes, you will be assessed fines. At the end of the project, your group has to be solvent in order to get a grade above a 'C.'

The members of your group, including yourself, are Pat, Chris, Lee, and Billy. (You will be assigned one of these four roles.) Pat and Chris met in a class a year ago and are good friends. Before you started the project, Lee and Billy did not know either Pat or Chris, nor did they know each other.

### Pat

Pat's family has always stressed the importance of good grades. Pat has a 3.8 grade point average.

### Chris

Chris is taking a full course load and is also working almost forty hours a week. Chris has always gotten good job performance reviews at work and is considered to be an excellent and dedicated worker. Chris has vowed to do everything possible to be a good group member and to attend the group meetings regularly. However, Chris has often made vague excuses for why a particular meeting time is not acceptable.

**Lee**

Lee is intelligent and very creative but really does not like things that have to do with math. In addition, when the group conversation is not related specifically to Lee's part in the group project, Lee seems distracted. Lee also seems to agree to things without really thinking about them.

**Billy**

Billy seems to work hard but also seems to take a long time to understand what's going on in the project. It's often difficult to understand Billy's ideas and comments.

*Meeting #1*

Your group had a great beginning. First you set a number of dates and times for group meetings, and you found it relatively easy to do this. Of course, everyone was busy. Pat, for example, mentioned a chess club meeting that was on Thursday nights, but the group managed to work around it.

Next, you got down to assigning roles for the project. You discussed whether or not your group should have a leader. Pat, particularly, argued in favor of having a leader. Finally, after a long discussion, you all agreed that everyone should be equal and that you would operate without a leader.

You then decided what other roles needed to be assigned. Chris volunteered to be the marketing director, Pat agreed to be the campaign manager, and Billy volunteered to be the secretary. Lee didn't express a preference. The remaining role that needed to be filled was that of finance manager. Lee said, "Well, I suppose I can do it if that's what we need." You all questioned Lee to make sure it was really acceptable, and Lee assured you that it was.

The project was on its way.

*Meeting #3*

The day before the third meeting, Billy found out that a relative needed to be picked up at the airport the next day. Unfortunately, the plane was due to arrive at the exact same time that the group meeting was to start. Billy called each of you, and the meeting was moved back three hours. Everyone was willing to change the meeting time.

*Meeting #4*

The fourth meeting was scheduled for Friday at 6 p.m. Everyone was supposed to come with a written list of ideas for organizing the project. Pat showed up at 5:50, and Lee was there by 6:00. Billy arrived at 6:10 and began talking with Pat and Lee. A few minutes later, a friend of Lee's walked by the meeting room. Lee got up and talked to the friend for the next fifteen minutes. Just as they were finishing their conversation, Chris rushed in and apologized for being late. Pat said, "Don't worry about it."

Pat started the meeting by suggesting that everyone share their list of suggestions. Chris had forgotten to bring it. Billy claimed that you had all agreed to develop the list at this meeting.

Pat laughed it off and suggested taking what you had and begin to develop the plan together. This was successful.

You scheduled the next meeting and decided to use it to begin some of the technical aspects of the project.

### *Meeting #5*

Billy was in a car accident and couldn't make the meeting. You understood and, with some difficulty, found another time to meet.

### *Meeting #6*

Pat showed up early as usual. Chris came on time, and Lee was ten minutes late. Billy came twenty-five minutes late and told you about how emotionally draining the accident had been.

After a few minutes, Chris suggested that you get started. Pat had sketched out many of the technical details but said that this was just a starting point and that you should work together to make the necessary modifications.

As Pat was explaining the details, a friend of Lee's walked by. Lee hadn't seen this friend in a while and jumped up to chat. After fifteen minutes, Lee returned to the group.

As Pat was explaining the ideas, Lee seemed distracted and was doodling. Then, Chris got up and said, apologetically, "I didn't think this meeting would last so long. I have another commitment. I'm already late, and I have to go."

Lee and Billy agreed with most of Pat's ideas and provided very little additional input. The meeting ended.

### *Meeting #8*

At the eighth meeting, you got a letter from the professor. Because of some financial miscalculations, you had been assessed a fine. Lee had made a major mistake, and it was going to cost.

You spent about ten minutes discussing your feelings about the fine and then went on to discuss the project. Pat presented several ideas for discussion. Lee seemed distracted and was doodling. Billy was quiet and didn't contribute anything.

After a few minutes, Billy and Lee got into a side conversation about Lee's friend. Pat and Chris continued to work on the details of the group project.

At the end of the meeting, since Billy was an expert on the computer, Pat assigned Billy to create a graphic that would be used for the project. Billy said it would be done by Saturday.

After scheduling the next meeting, you all left at 10:00 p.m.

*Meeting #11*

It is now Saturday morning. You are about to begin the eleventh meeting.

**Instructions***Step 1 (15 minutes)*

Read the background information on the group and its members. You will also be given a role description. Read this carefully as well. Do not share the details of your role with others in the class, especially your other group members. Decide what you will say to your other group members and how you will behave at the eleventh meeting.

*Step 2 (10 minutes)*

One group will be selected to role play the eleventh meeting while the rest of the class observes. Observers should look for both effective and ineffective behaviors and for strategies for dealing with the situation.

As a role player, the more real you can make the situation, the more effective the learning will be. Get into your role. Be the person. Remember, this is your group, and you want it to be successful.

*Step 3 (full class: open-ended)*

Explore the effective and ineffective behaviors, and make recommendations for improvement.

*Step 4 (10 minutes for the role play and open-ended discussion)*

Repeat Steps 2 and 3. Each round should have a different group in the fish bowl.

*Step 5 (open-ended)*

General class discussion.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What assumptions did each of the role players appear to be making about one another? What was the result of these assumptions?
2. Were the groups able to resolve their conflicts? Why or why not?
3. In what ways could group members have been more supportive of one another? If they had been more supportive, how do you feel the outcomes would have differed?
4. Did all of the role players accept responsibility for the current problem? If some did not, what was the impact of this on the group and its process?



5. What could this group have done differently that might have resulted in a healthier process and better resolution?
6. In what ways did the process change and improve with successive role plays? To what do you attribute this improvement?



## THE X-Y SCALE\*

### Objectives

- To examine beliefs about employee motivation as it applies to Theory X and Theory Y
- To explore the likely outcomes of both Theory X and Theory Y leadership

### Instructions

For each of the following statements, circle the answer that best completes it for you:

1. When a person is not working up to capacity, I am likely to assume that
  - A. it is because she or he is inherently lazy.
  - B. the lack of productivity is a result of the person's experience and that the situation can be changed.
2. I believe that the best way to motivate employees is to
  - A. tell them what to do and how and when to do it.
  - B. provide them with objectives to which they can be committed.
3. I believe that most people work because
  - A. they are seeking security.
  - B. they are attempting to fulfill ego/esteem or self-actualization needs.
4. When delegating work, I am likely to
  - A. assume that some of the work will need to be redone.
  - B. do so with confidence, assuming that the work will be done correctly.
5. In searching for a creative solution to an organizational problem, I would be likely to ask for input
  - A. only from a select few.
  - B. from all levels of the organization.
6. I believe that most people
  - A. actively avoid taking on responsibilities in the workplace.
  - B. actively seek taking on responsibilities in the workplace.

\* This exercise was written by Gail E. Gilmore.

7. When a manager goes on vacation, I believe that employees are likely to
  - A. use the absence as an opportunity to slack off.
  - B. keep up their usual level of productivity.
8. I believe that employees will
  - A. use up all their sick time, even when they're not sick, simply because they are entitled to do so.
  - B. usually take sick time only when they are sick.
9. I believe that most employees want to
  - A. have decisions in the workplace made for them.
  - B. be a part of the decision-making process.
10. I believe that most employees consider work to be
  - A. a necessary evil.
  - B. an opportunity to contribute to society.

### Scoring

Assign 1 point for each "A" answer, 2 points for each "B" answer, and total the points.

If your score falls between 16–20, you probably adhere to Theory Y principles.

If your score falls between 10–14, you most likely adhere to Theory X principles.

If your score is 15, you probably adhere to some of the principles of both theories.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Under what circumstances would a Theory X leadership style be more appropriate than Theory Y leadership? Under what circumstances would a Theory Y leadership style be more appropriate?
2. Discuss the relationship between Theory X and Theory Y and the concept of self-fulfilling prophecy. How do they interact?
3. What are some of the possible positive and negative outcomes using Theory X leadership or Theory Y leadership for an organization?



**THE CODFISH COMPANY\****Part I (45–60 minutes)*

You and four of your classmates have been assigned a team project that requires each of you to carry out at least one face-to-face interview with a manager at a company of the team's choosing. After you have completed these interviews, you and your teammates must then get together, compare interview results, and compose a single fifteen- to twenty-page paper on the job of a manager—for which you will all get the same grade. You must also do a twenty-minute presentation to your other classmates on your findings.

Your team has decided to interview managers at the Codfish Company, producers of high-quality marine hardware. All of your team's members agree that the product area is one that interests them. The project must be completed and turned in exactly six weeks from today; the oral presentation is to be delivered exactly one week later.

You realize that the best way to avoid last-minute chaos is to do some planning now. This will include selecting a leader, dividing the task into manageable pieces, and establishing a schedule. This will provide a structure or framework within which to accomplish your task. The following must be completed; they need not be done in order.

- A. Working together, choose a name for your team that you feel best describes its organizational culture. Team name: \_\_\_\_\_
- B. It is important that the team and the team's leader have clear and consistent expectations about the leader's role and responsibilities. As a team, discuss your expectations for the leadership role. List at least six to ten below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

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Next, decide on the specific duties you would like your leader to perform. List at least six to ten below:

1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____

6.	_____
7.	_____
8.	_____
9.	_____
10.	_____

Now that you have defined the leadership role and the leader's expected duties, select a leader. The leader should be a person you feel is best qualified and is willing to meet the expectations listed above. Enter that individual's name below.

Leader's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- C. Discuss what you believe the central (superordinate) goal of your team should be. Briefly and clearly state it below:

_____
_____
_____
_____

- D. Discuss the other goals and values shared by the team (e.g., making the most out of a learning experience, doing the least amount of work possible, being professional, etc.), and list at least three to five below:

_____
_____
_____
_____

- E. Divide the required project into at least six to eight component parts or jobs, and list them on the following grid. Be sure to include such jobs as typing the paper, proofreading, data gathering, organizing the oral presentation, and so forth. Assign each part or job to one or more person(s) on your team. List that person's name next to the job.

Part/Job	Assigned to
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____

- F. Develop a timeline or schedule to indicate by what date each component of your project should be complete. Draw the time line below.

- G. Assume that you have been given the right to fire a fellow student; under what circumstances would you do so? List the reasons.

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- H. Next, on a separate piece of paper, develop a firing policy that is agreed to and signed by all members of the team. The policy should include provisions for serving notice on the individual to be fired and a list of the circumstances under which that individual can make amends and preserve his or her position in the team.

*Part II (20-30 minutes)*

By your set due-date for completion of all interviews, two of the members have not yet held them.

- A. Knowing what you do about motivation, briefly describe below how you can convince the two who haven't completed their interviews to do so.

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- B. What should you do if you are unable to persuade the others to complete their interviews? Briefly describe below what the role of your leader should be in dealing with this problem.

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- C. The two members who had not done their interviews on time finally hand them in. You realize that the two have made the interviews up and haven't actually done them. The paper is due in two days. Briefly describe below what you believe you should do.

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- D. In what ways is your method for dealing with this problem consistent or inconsistent with your team's stated goals and values? Are you comfortable or uncomfortable with your goals and policies and the way in which they address your team's needs in dealing with a problem such as this? Why or why not?

Describe below any changes you would like to make to your statements of goals and policies to better meet such problems.

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- E. Your team finished the project and got an A- (with two faked interviews). Briefly describe below in what ways you believe your team was or was not successful.

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## ASSIGNING THE TEAM PROJECT TASKS

### Objectives

- To examine the strengths and weaknesses that each individual member brings to a team
- To explore ways in which to capitalize on the collective strength of the group
- To enable students to assign team project tasks in a way that utilizes each member's individual strengths

### Background

One of the primary reasons that teams are an integral part of most of today's organizations is the recognition that individuals bring to assignments or projects a variety of both strengths and weaknesses. When the strengths and talents of team members are appropriately harnessed, invariably the final product is superior to that which any individual member could have accomplished alone. However, teamwork only produces superior results when tasks are assigned according to each individual's strengths and talents. Assigning a given task to the team member who is least able to successfully perform that task will almost inevitably diminish the team's effectiveness.

As you work through this exercise, carefully consider where your strengths lie and what your most significant contributions to a team would be.

### The Team Project

You have been assigned to a team with which you will be working for the entire semester in your management course. Although you will be completing many small assignments together throughout the semester, they all seem fairly manageable. Your teammates appear to be serious about the course, and you don't generally anticipate any problems.

You are worried, however, about the final team project. To complete this project, your team has to select an organization, interview five to six managers in that organization, write a twelve-to-fifteen page paper, and give a professional presentation of your findings to the class. It's obvious to you that a significant amount of planning needs to take place in order to complete the project successfully. In fact, the more you think about it, the more the various tasks begin to "boggle your mind!" You decide to have a discussion with your team about assigning tasks for the team project. You believe that this needs to be done soon and that it needs to be done with care.

As a team, you decide that each member will make a list of her or his strengths and how she or he will best be able to contribute to the team project. You will then meet, make a list of the tasks that need to be completed, and assign each task to the person whose strengths and talents best match the task.

## Instructions

### 1. *Identifying strengths and talents (individually: 10 minutes)*

Working individually, identify the strengths and talents you feel you could bring to your team as you proceed with the project described. List these below:

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Next complete the sentence:

I will best be able to contribute to the success of the team project by . . .

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### 2. *Identifying project steps and tasks (teams: 20-25 minutes)*

As a team, make a list of each step required for the team project and of the task(s) necessary to complete that step. [Do not fill in the name of the individual(s) who will complete the task—this will take place during the next phase of the exercise.]

Example

**Step:** Find an organization to interview

**Task(s):** Research area companies  
 Make telephone calls to any contacts we may have at area companies  
 Make telephone calls to companies at which we have no contacts

**Individuals who will complete task(s):**

3. *Assigning tasks (teams: 30 minutes)*

Working as a team, compare the lists of strengths and talents and the contributions each member feels she or he is best able to make to the team project.

Based on this information, assign members to appropriate tasks.

4. *Report out and discussion (full class: 30 minutes)*

**Questions for Discussion**

1. In what ways did the assignment of tasks for this team project differ from what you have experienced in the past? What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of this method? Why?
2. Were you able to utilize effectively all members' strengths and talents in assigning the team project tasks?
3. Were there any tasks that you identified for which no team member had the requisite strengths or talents? How did you deal with these? Similarly, were there any tasks for which all members were qualified? How did you deal with these?
4. What do you see as the benefits or drawbacks of using this methodology in the workplace?
5. As a manager, would you participate in a team's use of this method? How? Why?



## MANAGING GROUP PERFORMANCE\*

There are five critical components of this exercise: To be effective, they should be used in the order in which they are presented.

### Introduction

Good groups are not an accident: A group member's participation, attitude, and understanding of how groups function can make a difference in whether the group is effective and productive.

"Managing Group Performance" is designed to help your group manage its performance. The components take you from the forming stage of your group through a face-to-face developmental feedback session for each group member.

"Managing Group Performance" has been used by thousands of graduate and undergraduate student groups. The overwhelmingly positive results have been documented by V. U. Druskat and S. B. Wolff in a paper entitled "Effects and timing of developmental peer appraisals in self-managing work groups" which appeared in *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(1), 58–74 in 1999. Their findings are that although some students initially feel anxiety about doing parts of the exercise, those who take the exercise seriously almost always recognize its benefits. The majority of students who have completed this exercise have suggested that all groups do it and that the feedback session be done more than once. While feedback may be given as often as group members wish, face-to-face performance feedback is only done once in class due to time limitations.

To help you understand the importance of each exercise component and how they build on each other, an explanation of the rationales for the exercises are provided on the following pages. You should read these as a group before proceeding with the exercises beginning on page 267. Whether your group turns out to be a nightmare or a terrific experience is in your hands and depends on the choices you make. To help you make effective choices, we have also included in the following introductory material a discussion of the factors that we have observed to make a difference in how effective each exercise component is for any particular group. We hope this will help you avoid common pitfalls and make the most of this exercise to create a high-performance team.

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## Component One: Group Formation / Psychological Contract

Each group has a unique combination of people. For your group to be successful you must understand the needs, preferences, styles, strengths, and weaknesses of each member. Some group members may be pressed for time, while others may need to socialize. Some group members may work best under pressure and wait to the last minute to complete an assignment, while others may be stressed by this and prefer to follow a methodical plan.

Some group members may find the project worthwhile and a good learning opportunity; others may just want to get it over with. You need to understand and accept each member and be flexible enough to accommodate their needs, use their strengths, and compensate for their weaknesses. When group members do not take the time to understand each other, differences may be evaluated negatively, resulting in tension. The people in your group are who they are; it may not be your preference, but you can't change them. It is your responsibility to accept them and make the differences and similarities work to the group's advantage. The forming portion of the assignment helps the group to understand the differences and similarities and to develop a plan to make them work for you. Getting to know one another has the added benefit of developing cohesiveness.

When a group starts, members have different expectations of how the group should operate. These expectations are referred to as a psychological contract. Some may expect the group to reach decisions by consensus; others may expect a vote to be taken. Some may prefer to have a leader, others may not. Some may expect their ideas to be respected and listened to, others may prefer a free-for-all. Some members may expect everyone to put in maximum effort and be available all the time; others may expect to do only what is necessary to pass the course. For your group to work together harmoniously, you need to agree on how the group will operate. You need to negotiate expectations and make them explicit. The psychological contract portion of this exercise asks you to do just that. This process is sometimes referred to as setting ground rules.

### Developing a Culture

The initial interaction in your group has a significant impact on the culture that develops. Thus, doing this exercise is only half the battle. How you go about doing the exercise will also impact the development of your group. What people actually do sends a more powerful message than what they say they will do. How group members act as you go about completing this exercise will form the basis upon which members make impressions about how the group is "really" going to work. Group members will be observing to determine whether it is OK to be late to meetings, to sit quietly and not contribute ideas, or to do a superficial job. People will be forming impressions about whether group members can be trusted, whether the group a safe place, and how much commitment is expected. Your behavior will affect your group and send a message to your teammates. Think about the culture you desire, and act accordingly.

### Success Factors

- All group members are present.
- A few hours are devoted to the assignment.
- Members are focused on getting to know one another not just completing the assignment.
- The group recognizes the importance of the exercise to its future success.
- Group members act responsibly and with respect.

One of the most frequent comments by groups that had difficulty managing performance is that they wish they had taken this exercise more seriously.

## Component Two: Developing a Performance Plan

The performance plan is an official agreement that spells out what constitutes acceptable performance and what will be done when performance is either above or below the standard. This is an important tool often used in organizations to manage performance. It also serves as the basis for providing performance feedback. The official agreement means that everyone knows what is expected and what the consequences of their actions will be. Each group member is responsible for choosing his or her own behaviors. The group as a whole is responsible for carrying through on the agreement should performance be above or below what has been agreed to be acceptable, i.e., ensure consequences of behavior are as agreed to.

Group members sometimes find it distasteful to formally discuss acceptable performance and consequences for performance above or below what is acceptable. They would rather trust that everyone will perform acceptably and not think about the unpleasant potentiality that the group might have problems. If you are lucky, everything will work out fine. If you are like most groups, counting on luck alone is a mistake that eliminates a useful tool for managing performance. Good managers and groups set themselves up for success—they don't just hope for it.

### Success Factors

- All group members are present.
- Thought is given to developing a comprehensive set of performance objectives.
- Performance objectives are set that are important and meaningful to the group. If you list an objective, you should feel strongly enough about it to take action if it is not met. If the objective is not meaningful to the group, leave it out.
- Objectives are specific and measurable. "Doing quality work," is subjective, while "Work should be free from spelling and grammatical errors," is specific and measurable.
- A set of policies and procedures that you feel comfortable using when performance is above or below what is acceptable is developed. If you aren't going to use it, don't include it.



- Policies and procedures are very specific. The more explicitly you define how the procedure will be initiated, who will be responsible for carrying out the policy, and what exactly are the steps to be taken, the more likely it will be a useful tool.
- A good set of rewards is developed. It is more effective and easier to recognize positive behavior.

The main reasons groups develop ineffective performance plans are: 1) they never anticipated having to use them, 2) they did not define the details clearly enough, 3) they defined policies they did not feel comfortable using, 4) all members were not present when the plan was created, 5) they did not feel comfortable following through on the consequences as agreed to, and 6) the consequences they did develop were either too weak to be effective for managing performance or so harsh they did not feel comfortable using them.

### **Component Three: Observing Peer Performance**

This and the remaining two components in this exercise are directly related to the face-to-face performance review that your team will conduct for each member. This review is based on the performance plan developed in the previous component. To be the most helpful when providing developmental feedback, you need to have good information.

You will be most successful when you can describe specific behaviors and their effects. Taking notes on performance allows you to provide the information needed to conduct a successful feedback session. As you take notes, remember that you should observe both positive and negative performance.

Students sometimes feel that taking notes on a teammate's performance is like spying. However, you are not spying. Instead, you are setting yourself up to provide the most helpful feedback possible. You are showing respect for your teammate by taking the time necessary to provide examples of behavior and explain their effect. In an ideal world, you should be providing feedback immediately when a behavior warrants it. If your group is able to provide feedback on a continuous basis, you will be far ahead of the game. Unfortunately, this does not always happen. In that case, you will need the information for the formal performance review.

It is also important that you observe your own performance. This information allows the person providing you with feedback to know what you are already aware of and what information will be new to you. This allows them to prepare a performance review that will be most helpful to you.

#### **Success Factors**

- Keeping notes regularly
- Making notes as soon after your observations as possible
- Writing down specific behaviors and their effects
- Being honest and thorough with your self-observation



The most common factors that cause problems are 1) waiting until the last minute to write down your thoughts; 2) being evaluative rather than noting specific behaviors and their effects; and 3) being unbalanced, i.e., not providing both positive and negative observations.

### **Component Four: Peer Evaluation**

Before you can successfully conduct a performance review, you must thoroughly prepare. Providing positive feedback is often easy; however, many people feel somewhat uncomfortable providing developmental feedback. This is often because of the way they frame what they are doing. If you are upset with certain behaviors, you may see providing feedback as a way to express your displeasure and change the person's behavior. Even if you are not upset, you may see providing feedback as criticizing a person or telling them they are inferior in some way. Such frames of mind are likely to make the recipient defensive and make you feel uncomfortable. A better way to approach providing feedback is to see yourself as being helpful and supportive. No one is perfect, and it is an act of caring to help a person understand how he or she can improve his or her performance. Think about someone criticizing you and telling you that you were doing a horrible job and needed to improve; how would you feel? On the other hand, if someone showed respect for you, didn't evaluate you but explained how you could be more effective, and then provided support to help you improve, how would you react?

To provide feedback from a supportive and caring frame of mind requires extensive preparation. You must first be in touch with your motives for providing feedback. Often, when you are upset with something it has as much to do with you as the person you are upset with. If you are angry and want to express it, you need to acknowledge this, understand why you are angry, and practice a more supportive approach. If you think the person is inferior, you need to acknowledge this, understand why you think so, and practice being non-evaluative.

If you are timid about providing developmental feedback, you need to acknowledge this and practice getting your message across clearly and in a way that avoids diminishing the message. Practicing giving feedback out loud and critiquing yourself will help you approach the process in a caring, nonjudgmental way. Also remember that no matter how caring your intentions are, in some situations the recipient will still react defensively. Anticipate this possibility, and practice your response. This will help you remain composed and in control of the situation. You deserve the most thoughtful and helpful feedback possible, and so do your teammates. Failure to practice thoroughly shows a lack of caring, diminishes your ability to help your teammate become more effective, and ultimately hurts the performance of the team.

#### **Success Factors**

- Self-reflect to recognize your motives in providing the feedback.
- Think of providing feedback as being caring, supportive, and helpful.
- Practice, practice, practice. Choose your words carefully. Watch your tone.
- Anticipate possible reactions and practice your response.

## Component Five: Performance Review / Feedback

This exercise component is the face-to-face performance review that will be conducted by your team. In most organizations, employees receive an annual performance review. Performance reviews are typically done by a manager; however, in an increasing number of organizations, self-managed teams conduct peer evaluations. The previous four exercise components set the groundwork for providing feedback. You will have gotten to know one another, developed a performance plan, observed performance, and prepared for your feedback session.

Giving and receiving feedback are important skills in today's organizations. In a fast-changing business environment, employees and organizations must continuously learn and improve. Doing so requires information about performance. When conducted in a respectful, caring, and supportive manner, the process creates stronger bonds among team members and improves the performance of the team as a whole.

The reviews are not intended to be the only time that peers provide feedback to each other. This should be an ongoing process. Whenever someone shows either positive or negative performance, she or he should be given feedback. The longer the time interval between the behavior and the feedback, the less effective the feedback. If timely feedback has been given, there should be no surprises during the formal review process.

### Success Factors

- Excellent preparation
- A caring, supportive, and helpful frame of mind. If what you are saying is not intended to be helpful, don't say it.
- Balanced positive and developmental feedback
- Use of specific examples of behaviors and their effects
- Developmental feedback is not diminished, e.g., "It's really not a big problem but. . ."
- Mutual problem-solving approach is used
- A conversational approach, i.e., review is not read or given as a prepared speech.

## MANAGING GROUP PERFORMANCE

This exercise, and the four that follow, are meant to be used as a series.

### GROUP FORMATION / PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

#### Objectives

- To manage the forming stage of group development by getting to know one another
- To acquaint participants with the concept of the psychological contract
- To give participants experience in managing psychological contracts by negotiating expectations

#### Background

Good groups are not an accident; you *can* make a difference. In this exercise you will learn what you can do to get your group off to a good start. The work of developing an effective group begins from the first minute you are together. The way that your group handles the forming stage and group member's expectations, impacts whether your group is going to be a pleasure, a nightmare, or somewhere between. What you do at this point will affect your group's culture, your ability to work together effectively, and ultimately the group's product. The purpose of this exercise is to help your group manage the forming stage and psychological contract in a way that will develop a positive and effective culture.

As you can imagine, in almost any group, members will have different needs and expectations based on their personalities and individual styles. Members will also have different strengths and weaknesses. One advantage of a team is that one person's strength can compensate for another's weakness. One disadvantage is that differences among members must be addressed, which takes time and energy. To avoid clashes due to differing expectations and to take advantage of different strengths and weaknesses, a team in the forming stage needs to do three things: 1) group members need to get to know each other, 2) you need to understand similarities and differences in the strengths, weaknesses, styles, and needs of group members, and 3) members need to come to an agreement as to what is to be expected of team members and how the group will operate. This exercise asks you to do these three things so you can get your group off to a good start.



As you do this exercise, it is important to realize that your group culture is beginning to form. The way the group operates, the behaviors that are acceptable, and what group members think of each other are all beginning to take shape. Thus, how you go about this exercise is just as important as doing the task. The culture that begins to develop is not cast in stone. It will change as time goes on, however, starting on a positive note will make your work together more enjoyable and effective in the future. It will also be less likely that you will need to expend time and energy to modify an ineffective culture.

### Instructions

1. Review the material on this exercise in the introduction to the series of exercises.
2. As a group, share information about:
  - Personal backgrounds.
  - Work history.
  - Current time constraints.
  - What you like and dislike about groups.
  - Strengths and weaknesses of working in a group.
  - Learning goals for the project/class.
  - Hopes and fears about the group.
  - How you work best.
  - If your instructor asked you to do self-assessments, share your results.
  - Please add other information you feel would be useful to know about one another.
3. You are likely to be similar in many ways and different in many ways. Similarity can make it easier to work together, but it can also reduce creativity and lower the quality of decisions. Diversity can make it difficult to come to agreement and can cause tension, but it can also lead to greater creativity and higher quality decisions. Discuss a strategy for using your similarities and differences. For example, discuss how you can use strengths to complement weaknesses; accommodate each member's style and needs; help each other meet learning goals; and avoid lack of creativity. For example, you might find one member likes to wait to the last minute to complete assignments while another member gets very anxious when things are left to the end. How will your group work together so the needs of both members are met? You might have found that some members are working full time while others are not. How will you take this into consideration when organizing your work? You might find that you think alike about certain issues. How can ensure that your group will remain creative? Write down your strategy.
4. Discuss your expectations of each other and how the group should operate.
  - How committed do you expect people to be?



- How much socialization do you expect?
  - How much do you expect all ideas to be explored?
  - Do you expect people to be prompt to meetings?
  - How prepared for meetings should people be?
  - How timely do you expect work to be done?
  - How much should team members support each other?
  - How do you expect team members to treat each other?
  - Please add other relevant expectations not listed above.
5. You will likely have different expectations of each other and different ideas about how the group should operate. Come to a consensus on a set of expectations that you all agree on. Write these down, being sure that each expectation is explicit, clearly explained, and agreed to by all.
6. The group should hand in one paper that discusses:
- The strategy you agreed to for using the similarities and differences within your group. As you discuss the strategy, provide enough information about the characteristics of members to illustrate why you have chosen your strategy. Do not list each member and their characteristics.
  - The agreed upon expectations of group members and how the team should work.
  - An assessment of the impact of this exercise on the team.

### Completion Checklist

- ☐ Spent time getting to know one another.
- ☐ Discussed expectations.
- ☐ Discussed a strategy for using the diversity in the group.
- ☐ Developed a document that discusses your strategy for working with the team's similarities and differences, your shared expectations, and the impact of this exercise on the group.

## DEVELOPING A PERFORMANCE PLAN

### Objectives

- To develop a performance plan to use as a tool to manage group performance
- To give participants practice in developing a performance plan

### Background

As your group begins work on your task, you may be optimistic that everyone will perform as expected. Organizations cannot rely on hope that people will perform as required, and neither can your group. To manage employee performance, organizations often develop specific objectives that define acceptable performance. They also have a set of policies and procedures that define what will be done if performance either exceeds or falls below the acceptable standard. In this exercise, your group will develop performance objectives along with policies and procedures.

As you develop your policies and procedures, keep in mind that they will only be helpful if, when it comes time for you to carry them out, the group feels comfortable following through. When you agree to a set of policies and procedures, you need to be willing to follow them or they become hollow words written on a piece of paper that have no meaning. One common set of policies and procedures used in organizations is called *progressive discipline*. Each time performance falls below expectations, the disciplinary action becomes more severe. The first instance might be a verbal warning and progress through termination. At each step, the employee is told why the performance is below expectations and how to bring it up to an acceptable level. In this way the employee is responsible for making the choice about whether he or she will meet expectations, knowing full well the consequences for failure to do so. The organization is responsible for carrying out the agreed-to consequences for failure to meet expectations.

Many groups find it difficult to discipline a peer. Keep in mind two things: first, if you have carefully developed and agreed to a set of objectives along with policies and procedures for addressing unacceptable performance, then discipline is simply implementing what the group has agreed to. Everyone knows and understands the consequences of their behavior and it is not uncommon for people to test the boundaries. If there are no consequences for inappropriate action, then your group's agreement is meaningless and you will not be able to successfully manage your performance—a position that a good manager or group member does not want to be in. When a boundary is tested, failure to act means the boundary will be pushed ever further. Second, it is much easier to address an issue the first time it comes up than to wait until it has become such a bad problem it can no longer be ignored. Remember, helping your teammate meet expectations is an act of respect and caring. You should try to

find out what he or she needs to meet expectations and provide any support that is reasonable. If you think of addressing performance issues as scolding or demeaning your teammate, you are less likely to carry through because your gut feeling is telling you doing so is inappropriate and potentially harmful, and your gut is correct.

In addition to helping the group manage its performance, in many organizations a set of performance objectives forms the basis of the annual employee review. The employee sits down with his or her manager and reviews how well his or her performance met the objectives. This process generally uses a performance appraisal form that summarizes the objectives and provides a place for the manager to offer feedback and suggestions on each objective. The final portion of this exercise asks you to create a performance appraisal form that you will use as a basis for conducting a performance review at a later date (see the last exercise in this series). Your form should summarize the group's objectives and provide room for written feedback and suggestions.

### Instructions

1. Review the material on this exercise in the introduction to the series of exercises.
2. Working as a group, agree to a set of performance objectives for all members. You should develop your own set of objectives; however, to get you started you might want to think about the following issues common in groups:
  - What do you expect concerning meeting attendance?
  - What do you expect concerning timeliness of task performance?
  - What do you expect concerning quality of task performance?
  - What ethical standards do you expect?
  - What do you expect concerning participation at meetings?
  - What do you expect concerning returning messages?
  - What do you expect concerning flexibility, e.g., meeting times?
  - Please add other objectives as you feel appropriate.

Describe your objectives in behavioral terms that are measurable. For example, it is better to include an objective that says, "We expect members to have their work ready on schedule," than to say, "We expect members to do their work." In the first case, you can measure whether the work was received on time. In the second case, the person may be doing her or his work but may not have it ready when needed. Another example might be "We expect members to correct spelling and grammar in their written work," as opposed to "We expect members to write well." In the first case, there is something you can measure. In the second case, writing well is subjective and can mean different things to different people.

3. As a group, agree to the procedures you will use if a team member's performance falls outside the agreed-upon norms. A typical system of progressive discipline might include



procedures for giving rewards (don't forget the positive side), giving oral feedback, giving a written warning, placing someone on probation, and termination. Define the set of procedures that you feel will work best for your group.

Be as specific as possible when you write your procedures. Think about how the procedure will be initiated. Who is going to be responsible for carrying through on the procedure? Exactly what steps should be taken? The more specific you are, the more likely you will use your procedures.

4. You now need to develop a set of policies that define the specific behaviors that will cause each procedure to be invoked. For example, you may decide coming to one meeting late is grounds for giving oral feedback; being late to two meetings is grounds for placing a person on probation; and being late to three meetings is grounds for dismissal. You may also decide that not finishing an assignment on time is immediate grounds for dismissal.
5. Based on the agreed-upon objectives, develop a performance appraisal form on which to summarize each team member's performance. This form will serve as a guide for giving feedback during a formal performance review conducted in class or elsewhere. Include space on your performance appraisal form to:
  - Evaluate strengths.
  - Evaluate areas for improvement.
  - Provide suggestions and comments for each objective.
  - Provide comments for each item that is scored by a scale (e.g., excellent to poor, or 1 to 5. Scalar ratings alone are not helpful unless explained).
  - Include the name of the person being reviewed.
  - Include the name of the reviewer.
6. Put together enough copies of the written performance expectations, policies and procedures, and performance appraisal forms to supply a complete packet to each team member and your instructor.

### Completion Checklist

- ☐ Developed performance expectations.
- ☐ Developed policies and procedures for managing performance.
- ☐ Policies and procedures are specific.
- ☐ Developed performance appraisal form.
- ☐ Left adequate space on performance appraisal form for extensive comments.
- ☐ Put together and signed a copy of the complete performance plan for each team member and the instructor.



## OBSERVING PEER PERFORMANCE

### Objectives

- To provide experience observing and documenting performance
- To prepare for a peer performance evaluation

### Background

To successfully manage performance, every team member must be prepared to provide helpful and accurate feedback to other team members. It is important to keep regular notes on the performance of peers to refer to when providing feedback. Relying on memory does not work. Notes should include examples of actual behaviors, positive as well as negative, and the effects the behaviors have on you and the group. The more specific you are, the better.

The purpose of keeping notes is not to create a secret log to spring on a teammate during a performance evaluation but rather to use as an aid to providing accurate and constructive feedback. The quality of your notes will have a direct impact on the effectiveness of the feedback you are able to give. In business, notes are useful in determining appropriate rewards for jobs well done and can also mean the difference between winning or losing costly wrongful dismissal lawsuits.

### Instructions

1. Review the material on this exercise in the introduction to the series of exercises.
2. Read the "Guide for Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback" beginning on Page 275.
3. Using a separate "Performance Observation Sheet" for each team member, record observations immediately following every group meeting. To be sure that these sheets will be useful to your teammates when they see them, include specific examples, and document any behaviors and their effects. Your entries should be honest, constructive, balanced (i.e., both helpful and unhelpful behaviors are noted), and meant to be helpful.
4. Because it is helpful to have a person's self-evaluation when providing feedback, you should also fill out a "Performance Observation Sheet" for yourself. This will be given to the person providing your feedback.

### **Completion Checklist**

- ☐ Understand guidelines for providing constructive and helpful feedback.
- ☐ Added notes to each teammate's "Performance Observation Sheet" after each meeting.
- ☐ Used a "Performance Observation Sheet" after each meeting to provide a self-evaluation.

## GUIDE FOR GIVING AND RECEIVING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Giving feedback, either positive or negative, can be difficult; but, if you respect the person, sincerely intend to be helpful, and understand a few simple guidelines, it can work out well. Receiving feedback will allow you to see things about yourself that you could not see in any other way. By illuminating your blind spots, you will be able to correct behaviors that are inhibiting your growth. Constructive feedback is an important gift. Every time you are able to use it wisely, you will have taken another step in your own development.

The following are some guidelines for giving and receiving feedback.

### Giving Feedback

1. Feedback must be intended to be helpful.
2. Do not evaluate. Instead, describe behaviors and their effects. Use “I” or “we” messages. For example say “When you do this, I feel ...” or “When you do this, we fall behind schedule because...” Do not say things like “You have a bad attitude” or “You’re lazy.” Such phrases are evaluative and most likely will produce defensive reactions.
3. Provide specific examples. The more recent the examples, and the more clearly they illustrate the behaviors and their effects, the better.
4. Be tentative. You are presenting your perceptions, not absolute truth.
5. Keep in mind that the receiver must be able to take concrete action based on the feedback.
6. Try to understand how you or the group may be contributing to the behavior of the person to whom you are providing feedback. For example, someone may not be contributing because they feel the group does not value their inputs. Ask the person to help you understand the factors that are contributing to their behavior.
7. Indicate a sincere willingness to help. It is difficult to change behaviors. As a manager, you must be willing to work with a person and make him/her immediately aware of behaviors that require change. In this way, you will help him/her develop. Be tolerant of recurrent behavior, but expect it to decrease in frequency. Also, if you or the group are contributing to the behavior, accept your responsibility and ask the person to help you be more effective in bringing about the desired behavior.

**Receiving Feedback**

1. Try to understand the feedback. Listen to the person giving you feedback, and try not to interrupt.
2. Try to avoid becoming defensive. This can be difficult, especially if the person giving the feedback is not highly skilled. You may have different perceptions of yourself, but it is important that you understand the perceptions of others.
3. You will gain more from feedback if you assume the feedback giver is trying to be helpful.
4. If the feedback is not clear, ask for clarification and examples.
5. Summarize by rephrasing the feedback. Ask the feedback giver to confirm that you have heard correctly.
6. Take responsibility for any behaviors that you agree might have been unhelpful and show a sincere willingness to modify these behaviors.
7. Avoid justifying your behavior unless asked to do so.
8. Remember, you are taking in information about how others are affected by your behavior. The information says something about this group at this time. It does not mean what you are doing is good or bad, so don't take it personally. Different people will be affected differently by the same behavior. Although you may not like your group's reaction to your behavior, it is an important skill to be flexible enough to adjust your behavior to the needs of this particular situation.



## Performance Observation Sheet (POS)

Person you are observing: \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Record the positive and negative behaviors you observe and their effect on you and the group. Be specific. While you should use your performance plan as a guide, you may see behaviors that are particularly helpful or detrimental that are not specifically defined in your plan. Record these as well. If you need more space, use additional paper.

Keep a separate form for each member of your group (including yourself), and make notes each time your group meets. Include the dates and circumstances under which the behavior occurred.

These forms may be removed and freely copied for use with this exercise.

Helpful behaviors	Effects on you and the group

(over)

Unhelpful behaviors	Effects on you and the group

## PEER EVALUATION

### Objectives

- To provide experience conducting a peer evaluation
- To provide experience in preparing for an actual performance review

### Background

Providing feedback requires careful preparation. This exercise is preparation for an actual performance review in which each person on your team will give feedback to one member and receive feedback from one member.

The exercise has two parts: first, your group must decide the logistics of who will provide feedback to whom. The second part, done individually, asks you to thoroughly prepare the feedback you will give to one of your teammates.

In the actual performance review, oral feedback will be given one-on-one; however, it must reflect the views of all team members. Thus, when you prepare your feedback, you must incorporate the perspectives of all of your teammates. Your goal is to provide an accurate picture of the team's feelings, not just your own. As you prepare for the peer review session you should use your team's "Performance Appraisal Form" to summarize the feedback you will give. You will work from this form when you deliver the feedback, and it will be given to the recipient, so make it helpful and complete.

### Instructions

#### *PART 1*

1. Distribute blank copies of your team's "Performance Appraisal Form" to each member.
2. Decide who will provide feedback to whom. Do not give feedback to the person who gives you feedback. A simple way to meet this requirement is to sit in a circle and each person is designated to give feedback to the person on his or her left. If you know someone is going to be absent during the formal reviews, do not include her or him. However, provide that person with feedback from the entire team at another time.
3. Collect the "Performance Observation Sheets" that each group member has filled out for the person to whom you will be giving feedback, including the person's self-assessment.
4. Look over the sheets, and make sure you understand them. Ask questions if necessary. Be sure you are able to illustrate performance with specific behaviors and their effects.

*PART 2*

5. Review the material on this exercise in the introduction to the series of exercises.
6. Working individually, thoroughly examine the information on the “Performance Observation Sheets” and summarize the data on your team’s “Performance Appraisal Form.” If there are differences in your teammates’ observations, note in the comments that some people felt one way and others felt another way. Everyone’s view must be represented, but you do not need to discuss this with your teammates. Also, take into consideration the person’s self-evaluation. This will help you understand what points require more explanation because the person is not aware of them. Your team’s “Performance Appraisal Form” should have a space to provide a general comment on strengths and opportunities for improvement; be sure to include at least one strength and one opportunity for improvement.
7. Put together a package that includes the completed “Performance Appraisal Form” and all “Performance Observation Sheets.” You will give this packet to the reviewee after the in-class feedback session.
8. Read the “Guide for Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback,” and practice the review session. Examine your motives and frame of reference. Practice giving the feedback out loud. Revise your feedback until you are being respectful, caring, supportive, and non-judgmental. Be sure you have specific examples of behaviors and that you explain the effects of the behavior. As you practice, remember that a person’s behavior is often influenced by the context: Ask the person if the group has contributed to his or her behavior in any way. For example, has the group made the person feel unvalued? Practice being supportive and working with the person to develop a plan that takes into consideration both an attempt on the group’s part to provide a more supportive context and an attempt on the recipient’s part to modify his or her behavior. Anticipate reactions and practice a response that conveys you are trying to be helpful. Your feedback should be balanced. It is just as important to explain the positive behaviors and their effects as it is to discuss unhelpful behaviors. As you practice make sure you convey the positive without diminishing the message you are trying to convey when delivering the developmental feedback. Be sure that you have practiced enough to provide the feedback without reading it from the performance appraisal form.



**Completion Checklist**

- ☐ You have carefully read the instructions.
- ☐ You have been assigned a person to review other than the person reviewing you.
- ☐ Members who will be absent from the actual review are not included in the assignment.
- ☐ A time for the entire team to review members who will be absent has been arranged.
- ☐ All POS's have been exchanged.
- ☐ All information on the POS's has been summarized on the "Performance Appraisal Form."
- ☐ You have included extensive comments for each item evaluated.
- ☐ You have all forms to bring to the actual peer review.
- ☐ You have rehearsed for the review and are able to represent the team's perspective.

## PERFORMANCE REVIEW / FEEDBACK

### Objectives

- To provide practice using a performance plan to evaluate performance
- To provide practice giving constructive feedback
- To provide practice receiving feedback

### Background

This exercise provides an opportunity to practice both giving and receiving feedback and will also provide a structured opportunity to address any performance issues that may exist within your project group. As you provide feedback, you should remember that your intent is to be helpful. If a person is performing well, you should let them know. Often, people are not aware of the positive ways that they affect the group. If a person's performance needs improvement, you should provide feedback in a developmental way. Help the person understand the behaviors that need improvement and their effects. Provide specific examples.

Behavior is partly driven by the person and partly by the situation the person is in, thus, to be truly helpful, you must understand the ways in which you and the group have contributed to the behavior.

You will be much more successful in improving the person's performance as well as the group's performance if you accept responsibility for the ways in which you and the group have brought about the person's behavior. This does not imply that the person is not fully responsible for their behavior, they are. It recognizes the reality that the recipient will often perceive the situation differently than you and that he or she is likely to partially attribute his or her behavior as being a reaction to the group. For example, a person may justify not having work done on time because another group member always criticizes it and eventually does it over. Whether the person's perception is accurate is not important, what matters is that performance improves. This is more likely if you treat developmental feedback as a problem-solving session. It is a two-way communication process where you work on the issues together and develop a mutual plan of action. For example, if a person shoots down ideas too quickly, get an agreement that the group will politely point this out when it happens and that the person will try to catch him or herself. If the person feels he or she must shoot down ideas because the group often gets off track and he or she is pressed for time, then ask the person to let the group know when it is off track. This will likely help the group remain focused and will also reduce the need the person feels to shoot down ideas—a win-win situation. Remember, behavior is hard to change and reoccurrence does not mean the person is not trying.

## Instructions

### 1. Do the following (5 minutes):

- Review the material on this exercise in the introduction to the series of exercises.
- Review the “Guide for Giving and Receiving Effective Feedback.”
- Review what you are going to say.
- Anticipate possible reactions.
- Consider how you can be the most helpful.

### 2. Conduct a performance review for each member (10 minutes for each review).

The two members conducting the review should sit facing each other, with the rest of the team observing. Do not rush through the process. Use your full 10 minutes as instructed below.

The reviewer should:

- Refer to the composite “Performance Appraisal Form” and POS’s.
- Provide specific examples of behaviors and their effects.
- Explain any numeric ratings.
- Include at least one strength and one opportunity for improvement.
- Ask how the team may be contributing to the person’s behavior.
- Discuss how the team can help.
- Develop a mutual plan for improving performance.
- Give the reviewee a copy of the “Performance Appraisal Form” and all POS’s.

The observers should:

- Look for behaviors that either help or hinder the feedback process.
- Take careful notes.
- Be sure that the reviewer has completed all that is required as indicated above.
- Provide feedback to the giver and recipient of feedback after each session.

After each review:

Remember that you are practicing the skills of giving and receiving feedback, so use the remaining allotted time for each review to process what happened. Observers should provide immediate feedback. What did they do well? What could they have improved? The observers can use the “Guide to Giving and Receiving Feedback” as a guide to answering these questions. The reviewer and reviewee should talk about what they were feeling as the review was taking place, what worked well for them, what felt uncomfortable, and what might be done differently to make the process more effective. Giving and receiving

feedback are important skills so try to help each other learn as much as you can about the process and how to do it effectively.

When time is up, go on to the next performance review. Adjust your chairs so the next reviewer and reviewee are facing each other. Repeat Step 2 until everyone has been reviewed.

3. *After all reviews are completed, use any remaining time to discuss the team as a whole.*

Examine what is going well and what could be improved to make the team more effective? What are the strengths of your group? What are the weaknesses? If there are any issues that you feel are important but were not raised in any review session, this is a good time to discuss them.

### **Completion Checklist**

- ☐ All members were reviewed.
- ☐ Plans to review absent members have been made.
- ☐ Every session has been critiqued.
- ☐ Observers have given their feedback.
- ☐ Original Performance Appraisal Form and all POS's have been given to reviewee.
- ☐ Remaining time has been used to discuss the team as a whole.



## CALENDARS AND CLIPS

### Objectives

- To examine the role of feedback in employer-employee relations
- To practice the skills of active listening and two-way communication
- To practice dealing with problems in stressful situations
- To practice giving feedback and setting goals

### Background

The setting is an independent business, Calendars and Clips, that deals in retail and quantity discount office and stationery items. It is wholly owned by Role Player 1, who employs five part-time clerks; a full-time assistant who handles stock, makes deliveries, and does odd jobs; and a full-time outside salesperson who receives a base salary and commissions.

The outside salesperson, Role Player 2, has been with the company for three years—since graduating from college. During this time, the personal-service aspect of the company, selling to small local professional offices and businesses that have the products delivered, has grown from practically nothing to over \$500,000 in gross receipts per year.

The owner and the salesperson have had a reasonably good working relationship. Today, the salesperson returns midway through the afternoon and announces across a store full of people that the store's biggest customer, a first cousin of the owner's spouse, has switched to the competition. The salesperson then walks into the owner's office and slams the door.

### Instructions

#### *Step 1 (5 minutes)*

Read the brief background of the situation at Calendars and Clips, and consider what you would do if you were the manager or the salesperson. In addition, familiarize yourself with the areas for consideration in the Part I Observer Sheet.

#### *Step 2 (10 minutes)*

The facilitator will distribute Part I, Role 1 to half of the class and Part I, Role 2 to the other half of the class. Read the role to which you have been assigned.

*Step 3 (20-30 minutes)*

Perform the role play. While doing so, stick to the facts that have been given, and stick closely to the role in an attempt to make the experience as realistic as possible. Try to reach a point at which there is mutual understanding of one another's position and further dialogue is possible. This exercise does not present a specific problem with a specific answer; rather, it requires the sharing of feelings in such a way that it is possible to preserve the relationship and to move ahead.

*Step 4 (30 minutes)*

Class discussion.

*Step 5 (60-90 minutes)*

Repeat the above steps with Part II of the exercise.

*Note: The roles for the owner and salesperson are in the Instructor's Manual.*

## Part I Observer Sheet

1. Did the owner allow the salesperson to take the lead in the discussion, listen, and make an effort to understand what the salesperson's concerns were? What clues did you have that this was or was not happening?

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2. Did the owner encourage the salesperson to talk about the issue? How?

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3. Did the owner focus on the issue to resolve it, or did the owner become sidetracked by personality or behavior issues? Why or why not?

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4. Were there ideas and attitudes of the owner and the salesperson that got in the way of their ability to communicate? Describe them.

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5. Did the owner make a timely effort to discuss solutions for the problem and plan for a future opportunity to get together and explore ideas generated by this meeting? How was this done?

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**Part II Observer Sheet**

1. In what ways did the owner try to set a relaxed and cooperative tone for the meeting?

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2. In what way did the owner involve or fail to involve the salesperson in the performance appraisal process?

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3. In areas in which there were problems, did the owner involve the salesperson in generating solutions? How?

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4. Was the owner able to give negative as well as positive feedback in a way that the salesperson could understand?

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5. Did the owner and the salesperson agree on an action plan? Was it realistic? Why or why not?

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6. Did they set a date for a future meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

7. If you were the owner, what would you have done differently?

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## **NO FOLLOWERS? NO LEADERS! THE LANGUAGE OF EMPOWERMENT\***

### **Objectives**

- To help participants explore the decision making and action options of followers
- To develop skills for fostering a knowledgeable and responsible followership
- To practice the leadership and followership skills necessary for communicating empowerment
- To practice the skills of giving helpful and supportive feedback
- To practice the skills of making one's needs understood

### **Background**

Empowering employees is the means for ensuring their maximum involvement and contribution. Without such empowerment, there is little chance of achieving total quality.

For leaders, empowering followers means avoiding being a highly directive “micromanager” who constantly looks over shoulders and is ready to jump when a subordinate errs. Instead, the empowering leader takes the role of a coach. The leader as coach supports the efforts of subordinates to take responsibility and works collaboratively with them to resolve problems. Empowered followers also have responsibilities. They can no longer rely on the hierarchy and rule book to dictate every decision and action.

Empowered followers have a responsibility to make their needs known and understood and to participate actively in organizational activities. They must make carefully thought-through decisions, take responsible actions, and be open to admitting mistakes when they occur.

The following exercise will give you an opportunity to practice and better understand the language of empowerment from the vantage points of follower, leader, and observer. The exercise was developed as a training exercise for middle managers, and each role scenario is based on an actual experience of a middle manager in a large company.

When you play the role of a leader or a follower in this exercise, you will be given frank and honest feedback from your teammates on how well you used the language of empowerment.

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When your role is that of observer, your responsibility is to take careful notes, using the observation sheets as a guide, and actively participate in the debriefing that follows the role play. If your team does more than one role play, use additional paper for your notes.

## Instructions

### 1. (10 minutes)

Working in your small team, decide who will play the leader and who will play the follower in each of the role plays. Over the course of the exercise, each team member will play either a follower or a leader at least once. Therefore, for a team of eight, select four leaders and four followers.

While there is only one leader role, there are several follower roles. If you are a follower, briefly scan the roles and select one. Negotiate with the other followers over who will play which roles so that each follower's role is played only once.

Hint: If you're uncomfortable with being a leader, play the leader's role. If you have problems making your needs known, elect to play a follower's role.

If you are a leader, try to avoid the temptation to read the roles of the followers.

All team members should read the "Leader's Role" and the "Questions for Observers."

### 2. (10 minutes)

Begin each role play by having the follower explain why she or he has asked for the meeting and what his or her needs are. Continue until a resolution has been reached or time is up, whichever comes first.

### 3. (10 minutes)

After the role play, discuss the effectiveness of each of the role players in dealing with the situation presented. Use the "Questions for Observers" as a guide.

While observing and during the debriefing, keep in mind that giving feedback is meant to be a helpful process. Give *specific* examples that illustrate your points, and concentrate on things over which the role players have some control, for example, "Your voice is irritating" probably is not helpful; "You spoke too fast" is something that can be changed with thought and practice.

During the debriefing, be sure to elicit from the role players their reflections on how they thought things went, why they did what they did, and what they might want to do differently in the future.

It is important for *all* team members to give input during the debriefing.

4. *(30 minutes per round)*

Repeat Steps 1 to 3. However, change to the following timing:

- 5 minutes to prepare by reviewing roles and questions
- 10 minutes for the role play
- 15 minutes to debrief

Continue to repeat the exercise until all team members have had the experience of playing either a leader or a follower.

5. *(Open-ended)*

Select a reporter for your team to describe what happened in your team to the class.

**Questions for Observers**

1. In what ways did the leader set the stage for an open and honest dialogue with the follower?
2. What evidence did you see of the role players' making sure they understood one another's needs and concerns as they went along?
3. In what ways did the role players come to an understanding of their common interests, for example, meeting customer needs, making one another's lives easier, finding a mutually acceptable solution to the problem, etc.?
4. In what ways did the leader try to empower the employee to make decisions and take action to solve the problem presented?
5. What would you have liked the leader to have done differently? Why?
6. Do you think it is likely, given what you observed, that the follower will feel empowered to make decisions and take action in the future? Why or why not?

## Leader's Role

You recently took a management course in which you learned about leadership skills and how to develop a followership that is able to make well-thought-out decisions and take effective actions. You were told that when employees aren't encouraged or allowed to use common sense and judgment, they may be unable to take action on customers' requests, frustrating the customer and making themselves appear foolish.

Now you're ready to try out what you have learned. It looks as if you're going to have a chance sooner than you had planned. One of your subordinates is on his or her way into your office. Recognizing some anxiety in your employee's voice when you spoke on the phone a few minutes ago, you agreed to meet right away, even though it's already after 5 p.m., and you're eager to go home.

Today has been about as hectic as possible, and the thought of having to deal with one more problem is not a happy one. You're not sure why your employees just don't go ahead and resolve problems instead of running to you with them all the time, but given what you learned in your course, you think this might be a good opportunity to find out. You think you would like to work cooperatively with the employee to understand and find some guidelines for solving the problem you are about to discuss. You would like to empower him or her to take the necessary action. You are also determined to convey to him or her your new belief that more decision making should be done by people closer to the problem.



## **Follower's Role 1**

You have just realized that some of the information in the report you gave to your boss last week was plainly wrong. You're pretty sure that the report has already been passed along to your boss's boss and that it is being used as the basis for some talks with a customer. If action is taken on the basis of this information, it will be costly to the company.

You actually recognized the mistake two days ago, but it's only today that you've gotten up enough courage to admit your mistake. You could blame the mistake on the people who supplied the information to you, but it was really your responsibility to have double-checked before passing it along.

It occurs to you that your boss also should have checked the information before passing it along—but you sigh, recognize that the boss is always the boss, and you think that sooner or later you would have gotten blamed. You have finally decided to try to cut your losses and admit to the mistake sooner rather than later.

Your boss has always had a tendency to “go ballistic” when mistakes are discovered.

At the start of the exercise, be sure to tell your boss why you have come and what your needs are.

## **Follower's Role 2**

Two weeks ago your boss delegated an important job to you that was supposed to have been completed by today. At first you felt a bit overwhelmed by the size and importance of the project, so you procrastinated on getting going.

When you finally did start the project, you realized it wasn't as bad as you had thought-or at least it wouldn't have been had you not waited so long, not had a full desk, and not had some distracting issues going on in your personal life.

It's now late in the day, and not only have you not delivered the project, you are still at least a couple of days from completing it if you do nothing else but work on it. In fact, even this is dependent on getting some information from someone who was really annoyed when you requested it on such short notice.

You know you need some help in figuring out how to fit the work for the project into your otherwise busy schedule. (As you talk to the leader, include information on the things you might actually do on a typical day.)

Your boss has a tendency to "go ballistic" when deadlines aren't met.

At the start of the exercise, be sure to tell your boss why you have come and what your needs are.

### **Follower's Role 3**

For the past several weeks the people in your work unit have been angry with one another. You have overheard whispers in the hallways and restrooms, and it seems that everyone has something nasty to say about someone else behind his or her back.

It all started, you think, with a misunderstanding between two people. Now, however, it seems to have spread. As far as you can tell, everyone is lined up on sides.

As the leader of your team, you have made a real effort to stay out of the battle and let your employees work it out among themselves. You thought it would blow over quickly, as these things have in the past. Now you recognize that it isn't going to go away so soon. Not only is productivity being severely and negatively impacted, you're also seeing some real undermining of individuals. You realize that things are either not getting done or not getting done well, and your own work is starting to suffer.

You need some help to figure out how to handle the problem, what to say, how to say it, and to whom to speak. You realize there could be repercussions for either taking or not taking action when it comes time for your performance evaluation, and your boss might blame you for letting the fight get so out of hand.

You hate to admit what is going on to your boss, but frankly you're not sure where else to turn. It's late in the day, but you've finally decided to ask for some help.

At the start of the exercise, be sure to tell your boss why you have come and what your needs are.

## **Follower's Role 4**

Seven months ago you asked for and got a lateral transfer because you were interested in learning some new skills and getting a broader understanding of the business. Your new unit has a reputation for being a great training ground and for being efficient and well run. This, you thought, would be the right way to learn what you had to learn and prove yourself in order to get ahead.

The first five or so months were terrific. Your boss told you exactly what to do and how to do it. If decisions had to be made, your boss was there to make them. You asked a steady stream of questions, and your boss always gave you clear and precise answers.

Now you really understand your job and can do it easily and well. While you appreciate your boss's availability, you think it is about time to start using your judgment and making some decisions on your own. Despite your competence, you have recently gone through a string of situations in which you took actions that your boss said were wrong even though the results were fine. When you pointed this out, your boss became visibly annoyed.

The relationship between you and your boss, which had been very good, now seems to be strained. You know it would be a mistake to ask for another transfer so soon and, besides, you like the work and the people in this unit.

You have decided that you're going to have to talk to your boss about your concerns and hope for the best.

At the start of the exercise, be sure to tell your boss why you have come and what your needs are.



## **Follower's Role 5**

Seven months ago, one of your peers in your team was promoted to supervisor. You were all pretty happy because the new supervisor is someone who works hard, is well liked, and gets along with virtually everyone.

Since then, your supervisor has never once said “good job” or even “bad job.” When it was time for your annual review, you wrote up your accomplishments, but you never got a chance to sit down with your supervisor and discuss them. All you got were some numbers on a standard appraisal form.

Once or twice you have asked for comments on particular projects, but your supervisor has just changed the subject. Instead, the discussion has ended up being more of a friendly chat about things that have nothing to do with work.

This morning you learned that your supervisor, without ever saying anything to you, almost completely rewrote a report that you had prepared. You wonder whether this has happened before. You have another report due tomorrow at noon for which your supervisor has given you little guidance.

You realize that the lack of feedback and interaction around job issues is keeping both of you from growing and moving ahead.

You have decided to talk to your supervisor about your concerns and hope that your comments will be taken in the spirit in which they are being offered.

At the start of the exercise, be sure to tell your boss why you have come and what your needs are.

## **Follower's Role 6**

Six months ago you were promoted to a manager's position. In this short time, you have been able to pull your people together into a hard-working, cohesive, and productive team by supporting and coaching them to make decisions and take actions.

When your people bring you bad news, you thank them, take responsibility, and work with them to resolve the problems. When they bring you good news, you thank them and make sure they get credit for their accomplishments.

Two of your best people had applied for transfers just before you arrived. Now they have made it clear they want to stay.

It's important to you to encourage your people to grow and move ahead, and you have made a point of giving each of your team members special opportunities to do so. For example, last week, when your team was to meet with upper management, you asked one of your people to run the meeting. You also asked several team members to give various parts of the report that had to do directly with their jobs, even though you know that giving the entire report was something the manager before you always did herself. An hour ago you read your annual performance appraisal. It says that you're not doing your job and that the only reason your team is succeeding is that you have good people working for you. Despite your team's efficiency and productivity, your boss has given you C/C+ rating at best.

You have decided that you have to talk to your boss about your concerns.

At the start of the exercise, be sure to tell your boss why you have come and what your needs are.

## **EARTHQUAKE**

### **A TEAM BUILDING SIMULATION\***

#### **The Situation**

**Monday, July 27, 7:12 p.m.**

**You and five coworkers are finishing a presentation for tomorrow's early-morning meeting. You are in the basement library of your ten-story downtown office building.**

"Oh my gosh, what is happening?" "I can't stand up."

"I think it's an earthquake! Watch out for those books, take cover, and get under the table!"

"Oh no, there go the lights!"

**The building shakes violently and then stops. There is a deathly silence except for the slow groan of the building settling. You begin to pick yourselves up and assess the damage.**

"Is everyone OK?"

"I think so, but my arm hurts."

"I've got a cut on my leg. One of those huge reference books hit me."

"Hey, does it look like the column in the corner came up over there?"

"It sure does. I wonder how badly the rest of the building was damaged?"

"How can you see anything in the dark?"

"There is some light coming in from the crack in the wall over there near the water heater. I'll go over and take a closer look."

"Forget about the damage, let's get out of here before the rest of the building gives way!"

"I think I smell gas. Does anyone else?"

"Do you hear a hissing sound?"

"I'm not sure if that is hissing or the building moving."

"Hey everyone, we aren't going anywhere. The stairs to the basement are completely blocked. There must be a ton of concrete here."

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“We have to get out of here. The whole building could cave in!”

“Everyone needs to calm down. We need to start looking for another way out. What about the elevator?”

“Nope, the shaft is jammed with rubble. I can feel a draft coming down, but I can’t see through all the debris.”

“Can we climb up on the water heater, and get out of the crack you found in the wall? The water heater seems to be OK.”

“Forget that idea. Only a small animal could fit through here.”

“I’ll check the phone. Maybe we can call for help. The telephone lines are not always damaged in these things—forget it, the lines are dead.”

“You obviously haven’t experienced a bad one yet. A great deal more than telephone lines are usually damaged.”

“How do you know it was a bad one?”

“It lasted longer and shook us around a lot more than most of them do.”

“Oh, so that makes you an authority on earthquakes?”

“Would you two stop arguing and come over here with the rest of us?! I found a radio by the janitor’s work bench. The news report will be a far more reliable source of information than you two.”

*We interrupt this broadcast to bring you an Action One special report . . .*

*There has been a major earthquake. At 7:12 p.m. this evening, San Francisco and the surrounding areas were rocked by an earthquake that experts say may have measured as high as 7.5 on the Richter Scale. It is believed to be one of the worst earthquakes to hit this area in decades. Initial estimates say that the quake lasted for approximately forty seconds and that the danger from the earthquake may not be over. There could be more shaking. The city’s telephone network is paralyzed. Electrical wires are down and a number of fires are burning throughout San Francisco. Gas explosions and water main ruptures are occurring throughout the city. Many buildings in the downtown area appear to be severely damaged. City officials say they may be forced to shut down all utility services to prevent fire outbreaks. Many freeway overpasses have collapsed and most of the San Francisco surface streets are clogged with debris and abandoned cars. Air traffic does not appear to be coming in or out of the San Francisco International Airport. Unofficially, the mayor was reported as saying that it could be seventy-two hours or more before city repair crews are able to restore communications and utilities. The mayor also requested that city residents stay off the streets, except for emergencies, until further notice and be prepared to be on their own for at least three days. Stay tuned for more updates . . .*

“It really does sound bad.”

“I wonder how long it will take someone to find us? Oh no!! The aftershocks are starting already.”



**Within ten minutes of the quake, a violent aftershock occurs and stirs up more dust and debris in the basement.**

“How are we ever going to survive this? Being stuck in this basement during these aftershocks isn’t very comforting.”

“At least they know there is damage to buildings in our area. Maybe they will look for us right away.”

“I don’t know. With all these aftershocks, it may be a while before they are able to dig us out.”

“You can never tell with these things. We might be here for a while, or someone may find us right away, so we need to make the best of it. Anyone find something we can use to look around a bit?”

“I found a flashlight. Let’s do an inventory of what we have to work with.”

#### **After searching through the rubble you find:**

- a working, battery-operated radio
- two candles
- cleaning supplies: mop, bucket, bleach, window cleaner, screwdriver, wrench, and work gloves
- a first-aid kit: bandages, antiseptic, gauze, and aspirin
- a package of matches
- a coffee machine, half pot of coffee, and three packages of coffee
- a flashlight with extra batteries
- four leftover chicken salad sandwiches in the refrigerator and two bags of chips (from the lunch meeting earlier in the day)
- three full ice-cube trays in the freezer
- six cans of cola

#### *Action Steps*

There are **seven action steps you should take** to ensure your survival and rescue and **five action steps that you should not take** because they are either unnecessary or may harm you. Decide which **seven** of the action steps listed **you would take**, assigning a “1” to what you would do first, a “2” to your second step, etc. (1-7). Then continue the ranking with the remaining **five steps you would not take** numbering them 8-12, twelfth being reserved for the most dangerous or least helpful step, eleventh, the next less dangerous step, etc.

Complete the individual ranking without discussing the situation with anyone else. Place your answers in column **A**.

Next, repeat the process in teams. Select, by consensus, the sequence that the team thinks makes the most sense. Put the team answers in column **D**.

<i>Your Rank</i>	<i>Expert Rank</i>	<i>Difference A to B</i>		<i>Team Rank</i>	<i>Expert Rank</i>	<i>Difference D to E</i>
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>		<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>
			Attempt to remove rubble from the entrance to the first floor			
			Divide the sandwiches and ration them over the next few days			
			Light the candles so you can see and rescuers will be able to locate you			
			Locate and secure a water supply			
			Divide the sandwiches and eat them this evening			
			Discuss long-term survival strategies as a group			
			Pound on the pipes with the steel wrench			
			Assign someone to monitor the radio and listen for updates			
			Check for injuries and administer first-aid			
			Shut off all utilities			
			Develop day & night signaling techniques: begin signaling immediately			
			Purify the water source			

Individual Score:

Team Score:

## Team-Effectiveness Scores

### STEP G Average Individual Score

Add up each Individual Score (the total of column C) in the group and divide by the number of people in the group.

### STEP H Team Score

The total of column F.

### STEP I Synergy Score

The difference between the TEAM SCORE and the AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL SCORE. If the TEAM SCORE is lower, then the “+” is indicated, signifying that the team achieved some degree of synergy. If the TEAM SCORE is higher, then a “-” is indicated, signifying the group did not work together effectively.

### STEP J Percent Change

The SYNERGY SCORE divided by the AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL SCORE.

### STEP K Lowest Individual Score on the Team

### STEP L Number of Individual Scores Lower Than the Team Score

## THREE BRAINSTORMING EXERCISES

### Objectives

- To practice the problem-solving technique of brainstorming
- To examine the impact of discounting on the creative process

### Background

Following are three problems for which brainstorming is a particularly useful technique. The first, “Flying Down to Rio,” is based on a mythical situation, while the two following, “Pre-school Television” and “Cop Out,” are based on actual problems for which brainstorming proved useful.

Use the following instructions and discussion questions for all three problems:

### Instructions

#### *Step 1 (5 minutes)*

Read the problem to be sure that you understand the issues and limitations of the possibilities.

#### *Step 2 (40 minutes)*

Using the six steps in brainstorming (see the “Methodologies and Skills” section at the beginning of this text), solve the problem presented.

Either the instructor or a class member should serve as facilitator.

Be sure that the ideas generated are recorded in a visible place.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Was the process successful? By what means did you measure its success?
2. Did ideas emerge that you hadn’t considered? Were you able to keep an open mind to the ideas of others?
3. To what degree did you use the ideas of others as sparks to your own creativity?
4. In what ways do you think brainstorming helped with problem solving?



## Flying Down to Rio<sup>1</sup>

Today is Thursday: You have just learned that there is a school trip leaving first thing Monday morning for Brazil's famous coastal city, Rio de Janeiro, where the beaches are white, the sea is clear blue, and the night spots are jumping. The trip is being sponsored as a field trip by your school's sociology department. Over the ten days in Rio, you will have to attend a couple of lectures—although you've heard from friends who have been on this trip before that no one really pays much attention to whether you're at the lectures or not. Best of all, the trip is subsidized by a grant, so that for a mere \$450, you'll get everything—transportation, meals, and deluxe hotel accommodations (four to a room) at a hotel on the beach.

The problem is that you don't have \$450. You have already spent your entire year's allowance, and your parents say "not one penny more." Your grandparents are living on their social security, and while they really love you, there isn't much they can do. You really want to go on that trip! Use the brainstorming technique to find a way to raise the needed money.

## Preschool Television

You are part of a team that has been asked to design a new television show for preschool children, ages two and a half to five and a half. The show will run on PST (Preschool Television), a new cable channel, from noon until 2:00 p.m. PST executives would like the show to be focused on a central character that can also be used as a logo for the entire cable channel.

Use the brainstorming technique to develop the appearance and personality of the character, and/or

Use the brainstorming technique to select a name for the character.

## Cop Out<sup>2</sup>

You have been hired as consultants to a rural community of eight thousand year-round residents. From approximately June 20 through Labor Day, the town has an additional two thousand summer residents, mainly retirees and families with young children. During ski season, mid-November through late March, two to three thousand skiers arrive each weekend.

The town employs six full-time police officers and five full-time firefighters. There is no more money in the budget for additional hires. There is, however, a \$72,000 budget line item to cover overtime hours worked by police and firefighters at peak times. At time and a half, this averages \$20.10 per overtime hour. The members of the town board that hired you would like to cut the overtime budget by at least 15 percent, but they're also worried about safety and law enforcement.

1. Special thanks to Professor Kent Seibert, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois for this idea.
2. Special thanks to criminalologist Roni Mayzer, Michigan State University, for her help with this exercise.

During the summer months and over the Christmas holidays, when fire risk is high, the fire department often becomes severely stressed. Up to three more firefighters may be needed on any given day. During this time, sick days for firefighters increase due to fatigue.

Should a major fire break out, at least twice the force size could be required. Between fires, and during most of the rest of the year—when fire risk is low—the firefighters often sit around doing little. Demand for police time is at its peak during the winter months when domestic violence increases. Demand also increases on the evenings of ski weekends due to a fair amount of hard drinking. During these periods, up to 10 percent of the emergency calls have a greater than 20 minutes response time. Some general calls, such as for traffic snarls, get no response at all.

The town's contract with the police department mandates that all members of the force be graduates of the police academy or trained by the department. The contract with the firefighters mandates that all firefighters be employed full-time. Volunteer firefighters may be used so long as they have completed the four-week certification program run by the state. The contract also specifies that at no time is there to be more than one volunteer for every two full-time firefighters.

First define the parameters of the town's problem. Then, use the brainstorming method to find a solution.

## WHAT DO YOU MAKE OUT OF THIS JUNK?

### Objectives

- To practice the technique of brainstorming
- To give participants a chance to examine and practice the facilitator's role in brainstorming

### Background

You are an executive management team of Old News, Inc. Until recently, your company has been able to generate a substantial profit by producing and selling cellulose insulation for buildings. Your primary production materials have been old newspapers, purchased at low rates from recycling programs, and lock-top-style plastic bags. Recently, however, a new form of insulation has been sweeping the market, and you see your market share steadily decreasing.

You have several warehouses full of your basic materials and an ample and inexpensive supply of more of the same readily available. Your job is to come up with (1) a new product for your company to produce that uses both of these available materials, and (2) a name for your product.

Several management teams from Old News, Inc. have been assigned to brainstorm and come up with suggestions for the most marketable and most profitable product. There will be a large financial bonus for the group that comes up with the idea that is ultimately adopted.

### Instructions

#### *Step 1 (40–60 minutes)*

Working with three to five of your classmates, assign a facilitator, and go through the six steps of the brainstorming process (see the “Methodologies and Skills” section at the beginning of this book) to find a product and then to decide on a name.

If you finish early, use the time to generate a backup concept in case your primary product proves to be impractical.

*Step 2 (10–15 minutes)*

Report your decision to the class, and discuss the merits of each of the suggestions.

*Step 3 (open-ended)*

Class discussion.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the brainstorming method?
2. In what kinds of situations would you use this method? In what kinds of situations would this method be inappropriate?
3. How did you feel during the process? Were you encouraged to participate? If not, what got in the way, and why? At any time, did you feel discounted? Why?
4. In what ways would you alter this process to make it more effective?



## DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE\*

### Objectives

- To explore ways to challenge and move beyond personal assumptions
- To better understand individual and organizational resistances to thinking about and doing things differently
- To explore the ways that individuals and groups can be powerful forces for creativity in the change process from old ways of thinking and doing to new

### Background

How can you stretch your imagination beyond its current limits, overcome what appear to be barriers, and do what seems to be impossible? This is often the predicament faced by organizations as competition and the need for rapid technological advances demand innovation and change.

This exercise requires you to move beyond your usual ways of thinking about and doing things to do something which, on its face, seems to be, if not impossible, at least something you cannot now do. Moving beyond traditional ways of thinking is a process that requires work and change for most people. The difficulties presented when innovation is required suggest some of the reasons that individuals and organizations resist doing it and therefore resist change.

It is clear that when new ways of thinking about and doing things are called for, working in groups is almost always more effective than working individually. Using techniques such as active listening and brainstorming, a group is usually able to generate more ideas than an individual, but only if the members are willing to let go of their individual biases and listen to one another with openness and respect. If not, groups and individuals in groups can create barriers to creativity and change.

### The Leader

In "Doing the Impossible," each group member has a responsibility to support the efforts of the leader and fellow group members, as well as to make his or her own significant contributions.

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The group leader has the potential to positively impact the group's process—but also the potential to interfere. It is the leader's task to provide a clear vision of the project, to help develop a well thought-through plan of action, to actively involve the participants, and to be sure that the ideas of group members are given appropriate support and validation.

### **The Task**

Your task is to come up with a safe way to read while jogging. Before proceeding, briefly review the “Questions for Discussion” below.

*Part 1 (small groups: 40-45 minutes) In completing the five steps below, be sure to budget your time.*

1. As a way to assess the resources and expertise in your group, spend a few minutes finding out about one another.
2. Select a leader and a spokesperson for your group.
3. As a group, come up with an agreed-upon design for a safe way to read while jogging. This will require you individually and collectively to think about the task, interpret what is meant by “a safe way to read while jogging,” communicate your ideas for a solution clearly to your group mates, and listen for the value in your group mates' ideas.
4. When you have agreed upon a design or concept, use the poster board and markers supplied to you to illustrate your solution.
5. Reflect individually and as a group on the process your group followed and your personal role in coming up with the solution. Write some brief answers to each of the Questions for Discussion, below. Then discuss your answers with your group.

*Part 2 (5 minutes per group and open-ended discussion)*

Present your solution, using the graphic you have developed on the poster board, to the larger group. The spokesperson should briefly describe the barriers to developing a solution to the problem that your group met and how you overcame those barriers. Particularly consider the role your group leader played in facilitating the solution.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. What traditional ways of thinking did you and your group mates have to overcome in order to complete this task?
2. How did your group overcome the barriers to solving the problem and executing the task?
3. In what ways did your group leader facilitate solving the problem? What should the leader have done differently?
5. How can you apply what you have just learned to the workplace?

## CYRIL AND EDNA: THE MANAGER AS MEDIATOR

### Objectives

- To develop skills for managing and mediating conflict in the work place
- To practice the skills of active listening
- To practice the skills of making one's needs understood
- To help parties to a conflict recognize their common superordinate goals

### Background

"Cyril and Edna" presents a case of interpersonal conflict in the work place in which many behaviors continue without comment (avoidance) despite their irritating nature. In an attempt to keep peace, coworkers often let their feelings fester and build, finally reaching a boiling point. When this happens, it is generally the role of the manager to surface the issues and mediate the dispute in a helpful manner. When the manager fails to do this, the frequent result is employee turnover, diminished productivity, and loss of morale.

Before beginning this role play, be sure to review tips for handling conflict in the work place and active listening skills in the "Methodologies and Skills" section at the front of this book.

If you are the manager, decide which of your two employees you will have speak first and how you will explain that choice to them. Hint: If you decide that one employee has more invested in the dispute than the other and should therefore begin the discussion, you are going to have to make that clear without minimizing the other's concerns. Other possibilities are to flip a coin or explain that you have made an arbitrary decision to start with the employee, e.g., sitting to your right.

Be sure you have given each employee ample opportunity to say what is on his or her mind before moving to the other. This will require you to listen actively and ask probing but non-threatening and open-ended questions to elicit the necessary information. Remember that some material may be difficult for your employees to talk about, and some may be difficult for you to hear. In this case in particular, there are issues of race and racism that are likely to emerge and with which you must deal.

As manager, be sure to set some basic ground rules at the outset, most importantly that only one employee may speak at a time. Avoid making decisions for or imposing solutions on the participants.

If you play the role of either Cyril or Edna, feel free to add any details to your story that suit your purpose. Think about how you would react if you were actually in your character's position, and bring that to the conversation. You do not need to reveal all of your feelings and issues about the events in the office immediately if your own personal style is to leak out a little at a time.

When your role is that of observer, your responsibility is to take careful notes, using the "Questions for Observers" as a guide, and to give the role players explicit feedback.

## Instructions

### *Step 1 (10 minutes)*

You will be working in groups of three or more. Decide who will be the manager, Edna, Cyril, and the observers (if there are to be any). *Everyone should read the manager's role and the "Questions for Observers,"* both of which are found on the following pages. The roles of Edna and Cyril will be distributed to you.

If you are Cyril, do not read Edna's role, and vice versa. In addition, the manager should not read Cyril's or Edna's roles.

Think carefully about your role and how you wish to play it. Make margin notes on the role description to help yourself along. Before beginning, be sure you are clear on what your issues are.

### *Step 2 (20–30 minutes)*

Begin by having the manager explain why the meeting has been called and what the ground-rules are to be. Continue until you have reached a resolution that is agreeable to both Edna and Cyril and that is realistic, or until the time is up.

### *Step 3 (15 minutes)*

Using "Work Sheet 1" as a guide, describe to your group what you felt as you played your role. Be honest and open, for example, if you felt your manager wasn't listening to you, say so, and explain why.

### *Step 4 (10 minutes)*

Using "Work Sheet 2" as a guide, record your group's resolution and some general observations about your group's methods, successes, and areas for improvement. Discuss.

### *Step 5 (open-ended)*

Report your outcome to the class. Discuss.



**Questions for Observers**

1. What mutual interests do Cyril and Edna have? Did these become clear during the mediation? How?
2. What was the resolution? Was it satisfactory to both parties? Why or why not?
3. What did the manager do well?
  - a. Did the manager set out clear reasons for meeting?
  - b. Did the manager clarify the process and the guidelines?
  - c. Did the manager listen to each party without being judgmental?
  - d. Did the manager rephrase and clarify the issues raised?
  - e. Did the manager ask open-ended questions to elicit information?
  - f. Was the manager able to control repetitious arguing?
4. What would you have liked the manager to do differently?

*Note: The roles for Cyril and Edna are in the Instructor's Manual.*

## Role: Manager

You are the manager of the technical support division of a medium-sized software development firm. Your job is to manage fifteen technical support representatives, eight of whom are regularly on the road visiting customers. The other seven take phone calls from often frustrated and sometimes abusive customers.

Generally morale has been high in your unit, despite the intensity of your employees' jobs. You've tried to create an atmosphere of having fun, and you have fostered cooperative decision making and problem solving.

Each representative sits in a cubicle; the seven cubicles are separated by partitions that are approximately five feet high. There is considerable visiting from cubicle to cubicle and a fair amount of conversation over the partitions.

Yesterday, Cyril and Edna, two of the telephone representatives, came to you independently complaining of one another's behavior. You do not yet know the details of their complaints, and you were surprised because in the past they seemed to have gotten along. Each has been in your division for a little over two years, and both have demonstrated a high degree of competence in their jobs. Customers seem to like them.

Cyril is a 25-year-old black man with an engineering degree. Edna, 48 years old, returned to the workforce after raising her children. This is her first job since going back to work. Both Cyril and Edna have been with the company for between two and two and a half years.

You have decided that the best way to deal with the conflict is to bring Cyril and Edna together in your office to find out what is on their minds and to work out a resolution. Your job is to mediate the dispute, being sure that each of the disputants is heard, that the resolution comes from them, and that it is agreed to by both.

**Work Sheet 1**

1. Briefly describe at least five feelings you had as you played your role. Begin each description with the words "I felt . . ." and then describe why you think you felt the way you did. For example, you might note, "I felt frustrated because my manager kept interrupting me," or "I felt Edna wasn't really listening to me because she was always looking in the other direction."

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2. Briefly describe why you believe the resolution, if you were able to reach one, will or will not satisfy your needs and the needs of your organization.

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## Work Sheet 2

1. Briefly describe the mediation process and its results.

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2. Were all issues dealt with appropriately? Why or why not?

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3. In what ways did you feel the process was successful?

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4. In what ways do you feel the process could have been better?

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## **CONFRONTATION AT CAPTAIN COOK'S\***

### **PART 1**

#### **Objectives**

- To examine the origins of conflict
- To examine personal styles in reacting to conflict
- To practice the skills of managing conflict through confrontation

#### **Background**

When people live together, work together, and even play together, a certain amount of conflict is inevitable and actually even healthy and useful when managed effectively. Ineffective management of conflict most often results in strained and sometimes broken relationships and a stressful environment in which far more than just the direct parties to the dispute become involved. As conflict continues unresolved, stress builds, and morale and productivity generally go down.

Effective conflict management allows the parties to the conflict to learn and grow from the experience, develop a more open and cooperative relationship, and build skills for handling future conflict. It can also result in creative solutions to difficult problems.

“Confrontation at Captain Cook’s” presents conflict between two individuals, supervisor and subordinate, who have different needs and for each of whom the path to fulfilling those needs seems to be contrary to the other.

Before performing this role play, be sure you are familiar with the skills of managing confrontation and of active listening, described in the Methodologies and Skills section of this book. Be sure also to read the Observer Sheet that appears just after the roles. Since the roles of both the manager and the waitperson are in the book, try to limit yourself to reading only the one to which you have been assigned.

When you play the role of the manager or the waitperson in this exercise, you will be given frank and honest feedback from one or more observers on how well you managed the confrontation.

Diligent observers are critical to this exercise. Since managing conflict by confrontation requires a structured set of skills, observers must take careful notes and be prepared to explain to the role players what they did well and what they will need to work on in their conflict management styles. Use the Observer Sheet as a guide.

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**Instructions***1. (small groups: 10 minutes)*

Working in your group of three to six participants, decide, without looking at the roles, who will play the manager and who will play the waitperson. All others will be observers. Also, select a spokesperson for the group who will report to the rest of the class.

If you are to play either the manager or the waitperson, read your role carefully (at least twice) and make notes as to how you will present your side of the conflict. Be sure also to read the Observer Sheet.

If you are an observer, review the skills of active listening, the tips for managing confrontation, and the Observer Sheet. It is not necessary for you to read the roles.

*2. (small groups: 15 minutes)*

Begin the role play by having the manager explain why the meeting has been requested. Continue until a resolution has been reached or time is up, whichever comes first.

*3. (small groups: 15 minutes)*

After the role play, the manager and the waitperson should describe how they felt during the role play and in what ways they acted differently from their usual behavior in the face of conflict.

Next, have each of the observers report what they observed, using specific information, and make suggestions for what could be improved. It is important for all members of the group to give input at this stage.

*4. (open-ended)*

Have your spokesperson report your findings to the rest of the class. Discuss.

## Role 1: Manager

You are the new manager of Captain Cook's, a small seasonal restaurant on the southern coast of Maine. You got the job after having been a line cook in the restaurant last summer, when you received the Captain Cook Award for excellent work. You also gained some experience as a waiter at a five-star resort hotel in Colorado over the winter.

You have heard through the grapevine that some of the waiters and waitresses who worked at Captain Cook's during the previous summer are wary of your new position and skeptical of the new policies and procedures for servicing customers. In discussing your concern about this with the owner, he said that he would support you 100 percent in enforcing the new policies. "If anyone gives you a hard time," the Captain told you, "you let me know, and they're history."

During the first couple of weeks of the summer season, some of the waitstaff complained about the lack of customers during the lunch shift. In response, two days ago you sent two of your employees out to distribute menus to the various hotels, cabins, and bed and breakfasts in the area. Yesterday, you overheard Mickey, one of the waitstaff, talking about having difficulty making enough money during the lunch shift to cover the cost of a baby-sitter and wondering whether it's worth working at all. Hearing this, you offered to have Mickey become the host-cashier for today's lunch shift, a position that insures a reasonable hourly wage rather than having to depend largely on tips. After a few moments of thinking about it, Mickey took your offer.

Last evening, when the restaurant was busy, you pitched in to help some of the waitstaff in addition to performing your duties as host-cashier. You left last night feeling satisfied that you are doing your best to support your employees and keep them happy. You are particularly pleased that your goal of having an "open-door relationship" with your employees seems to be working.

Today, after your meeting with the Captain, you stopped into the restaurant during the lunch shift. The outside deck was filled with customers, and the waitstaff was busy. At the host-cashier desk, however, you were confronted by an angry customer.

"What do I have to do to pay my bill around here?" he demanded. "I've been standing here for twenty minutes waiting to pay. You're lucky I'm honest, or I just would have left without paying. Two people ahead of me just gave up and took off."

After apologizing to the customer and handling his payment, you discovered that Mickey was outside on the deck taking an order from a table. It was at least five minutes before Mickey returned to the host-cashier desk, during which time you took payments and showed parties to their tables. "Mickey," you hissed through gritted teeth. "Be in my office right after your shift, or else."

You're angry, and you want to know why Mickey was waiting on tables instead of tending to the hosting duties. You're also upset that you're going to be called to account for the checks that went unpaid.

Lunch shift is over, and Mickey is now in your office. Confront Mickey with the problem.



## Role 2: Mickey

For the fourth summer in a row, you were hired as a member of the waitstaff at Captain Cook's, a small seasonal restaurant on the southern coast of Maine. You were surprised to discover that the new manager is much younger than you, was only one of the line cooks last summer, and is someone who never particularly impressed you. In addition, this manager has introduced a lot of new policies and procedures that make you uncomfortable, like greeting repeat customers by name and making specific menu recommendations.

The first few weeks of the season had been extremely slow, and you were not even able to make enough money to cover the cost of the baby-sitter you hire to watch your young child. When the manager asked if you would prefer to work as the host-cashier during the usually slow lunch shift, you accepted, figuring that the hourly wage would be a safer bet than relying on tips. As the host, you would be responsible for seating customers, and as the cashier, you would take credit-card and cash payments and make change.

Today, on your first day as host-cashier, you quickly realized that the lunch shift was much busier than yesterday or anytime since the restaurant opened for the season. As you seated more and more customers, it became obvious that the waitstaff was making a lot in tips—more than you would make for your four-hour shift. Because you really need the money, you decided that you would wait on a couple of tables on the outside deck along with doing the host-cashier job. One of your friends who works the dinner shift told you that the manager had done the same thing last night when things got busy.

After serving one table and taking an order from another, you came in off the deck to find your manager, who wasn't scheduled to start working for another three hours, at the cashier desk taking a payment from a customer. About five other customers were waiting to pay. You're sure they hadn't been waiting very long, because you had checked the desk just a few minutes earlier.

You don't think anyone heard the manager angrily telling you to report to the office immediately after your shift. You're not sure what this is all about, and as far as you're concerned, you were doing your job and doing it well. You're also feeling rushed, since you have to get home in time for your baby-sitter to leave for football practice. You realize that you'll have to find a way to defend yourself if you're going to keep your job. Lunch shift is over, and you are now in your manager's office.



**Observer Sheet: Part 1**

	Yes	No
1. Did the manager listen to the employee?		
2. Did the manager focus on the behaviors rather than the person?		
3. Did the manager show emotions?		
4. Was the manager's show of emotions appropriate?		
5. Was the manager direct and assertive?		
6. Did the manager ask for specific behavioral changes?		
7. Did the manager discuss the consequences should the behavior occur again?		
8. Did the manager check to see that the employee understood the message?		

9. What emotions did the manager display, and how?

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10. What specific behavioral changes did the manager request? In what ways was the request appropriate or not?

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11. What did the manager do particularly well in managing this conflict by confrontation?

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12. In what ways does the manager need to improve?

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## CONFRONTATION AT CAPTAIN COOK'S PART 2—TWO DAYS LATER

### Instructions

#### 1. (5 minutes)

Assign the Part 2 roles of manager and waitperson to two new role players. Repeat the process as in Instruction #1 of Part 1.

If you are the manager, consider how you feel about what your employee has done (as described in Part 2) and what you believe motivated her or him. Based on this, make some notes about how you will continue.

If you are the waitperson, consider what your manager is likely to feel about what you have done (as described in Part 2) and whether you feel you handled the situation appropriately.

If you are an observer, review the questions on the Observer Sheet that follows the roles.

#### 2. (15 minutes)

Begin the role play by having the manager explain why the meeting has been requested. Continue until a resolution has been reached or time is up, whichever comes first.

#### 3. (15 minutes)

After the role play, the manager and the waitperson should describe how they felt during the role play and in what ways they acted differently from their usual behavior in the face of conflict.

Next, have each of the observers report what they observed, using specific information, and make suggestions for what could be improved. It is important for all members of the group to give input at this stage.

#### 4. (open ended)

Have your spokesperson report your findings to the rest of the class.

### **Role 1: Manager**

#### **Two Days Later**

Although you feel you might have done a few things differently in your confrontation with Mickey two days ago, you feel that you got your message across and that the matter was settled.

This morning, at your meeting with the Captain, you were surprised to hear that Mickey had gone to him to complain that you have been “taking tables away from the waitstaff when you were supposed to be the host-cashier.” After you told the Captain about what had happened and how you handled it, he tells you, “I don’t care what you do over there because I trust that you are doing a good job. But I don’t need any employees who are going to be back-stabbing the people they work with. It’s up to you how you handle this.”

When you got to the restaurant, you asked Mickey to meet you in your office immediately after the lunch shift. Mickey has just walked into your office. Begin by telling Mickey why you have requested the meeting.

## **Role 2: Mickey**

### **Two Days Later**

Your meeting with your manager two days ago left you with some unresolved feelings about what happened. In particular, you felt that your manager was being pretty hypocritical about not wanting you to be both host-cashier and a waitperson when things got busy. After all, this is exactly what the manager has been doing; so why shouldn't you?

Since this is your fourth summer at Captain Cook's, and you feel you know the Captain pretty well, you decided to go to him and tell him about the manager taking tables away from the waitstaff. After all, you think, if you can't make extra money by waiting on tables while being host-cashier, why should the manager?

Yesterday afternoon, you dropped by and had a chat with the Captain. The two of you had coffee and an amiable conversation about the town, the tourist season, and events at the restaurant. When you told him of your concerns, he said he would speak to the manager about your complaint. Now the manager has requested another meeting with you, and you have just walked into the office.



**Observer Sheet: Part 2**

	Yes	No
1. Did the manager listen to the employee?		
2. Did the manager focus on the behaviors rather than the person?		
3. Did the manager show emotions?		
4. Was the manager's show of emotions appropriate?		
5. Was the manager direct and assertive?		
6. Did the manager ask for specific behavioral changes?		
7. Did the manager discuss the consequences should the behavior occur again?		
8. Did the manager check to see that the employee understood the message?		

9. If you were Mickey, what would you have done differently?

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10. In what ways did the manager handle this second confrontation appropriately?

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11. What would you have liked the manager to have done differently? Why?

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## FIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT ROLE PLAYS

### Objectives

- To consider the components of conflict
- To examine personal styles of reacting to conflict
- To explore ways of finding mutual interests in conflict situations
- To practice the skills of conflict resolution

### Background

The following five role plays offer scenarios of conflict that are either vertical (between two persons of differing positions and power) or horizontal (between peers with roughly equal power). They are based on typical conflicts that most people encounter many times in their lives. Characters in these conflicts confront one another over differences of opinion, needs and concerns, and objectives.

Before trying this exercise, be sure you are familiar with role plays, the skills of managing confrontations, and the skills of active listening, described in the “Methodologies and Skills” section of this book.

The emotions of the role players are not clear in the role descriptions. Role players should project their own feelings and emotions into the situations presented in the role descriptions. For example, if you are a role player and find yourself in a situation in which you believe you would feel angry or frustrated, convey those feelings through your role.

Each role play should be repeated at least twice (for a total of three times) with different players. Discussion should follow each round and should explore what the role players did well and what they might have done differently.

### Instructions

#### 1. (*individually: 10–15 minutes*)

Read both roles of the role play assigned. In the margins, make some notes about where you see the areas of disagreement and how you might feel about your situation should you be in one of the roles. For example, in the role play between parent and teen, think about how you would feel if you were the parent and how you might feel if you were the teen. Use the “Questions for Discussion” as a guide.

## 2. *Role play (10 minutes)*

Two people will be selected at random to play the given roles in front of the entire group. After 10 minutes, the role play should stop whether or not a resolution has been reached.

During the role plays, observers should make notes as to what the role players are doing well and what they might have done differently.

## 3. *Debrief (whole group: open-ended)*

Using the “Questions for Discussion” as a guide, explore what the role players did well and what they might have done differently to bring about a different resolution.

## 4. *Repeat the role play with new players, as above.*

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. Were the role players able to state their interests clearly? What else might they have said, and how might they have said it?
2. Did the role players listen to one another? If not, what kinds of static got in the way? Include in this a discussion of the emotions that were displayed and how the display of those emotions impacted the ability of the role players to reach resolution.
3. What did the role players do well in bringing about a meaningful resolution? What might they have done differently? If no resolution was reached, what might the role players have done to come to an agreement?
4. In the repetition of the role play, what traps did role players appear to have avoided by having seen the previous role play(s)?

## Role Play 1—The Photography Store

### Manager

You are the manager of a branch store of The Colorworks, a company that processes and prints still film and sells photography supplies. Some of the processing is done in-house on a Fuji Minilab 23MII. Black-and-white developing and unusual format printing, such as posters, are sent to your central processing plant. Your store is one of the busiest in the region. Salaries are low throughout The Colorworks network, and turnover is high. Most employees are unskilled and learn on the job.

This morning, just as the shop was getting busy, your two employees got into an argument with one another, blamed it on you, quit, and walked out. This has left you alone to complete the in-house processing and wait on customers.

### Customer

You arrived at The Colorworks about 15 minutes ago to pick up the black-and-white prints that you dropped off for processing about a week ago. You're parked at a meter that is about to run out, and you had expected much faster service.

When you finally get the prints—photographs of family members, some quite elderly, taken at a once-in-a-lifetime family event—you notice that the envelope in which the prints are packed is stamped “received damaged.”

Checking through, indeed you find that about 1/3 of the prints are badly spotted and scratched. In addition, all but a couple are poorly printed, and detail is washed out.

You are a fairly experienced amateur photographer and don't believe that the fault is either with your photography or your brand new, \$3000 Leica camera. You also don't believe that you delivered the film damaged, as you actually had taken the film out of the camera at the shop.



## Role Play 2—The Party

### Parent

You are the parent of an 18-year-old who is home for the first time since leaving for college this past September. Tonight, your college student wants to take the car to go to a party at the apartment of a high school friend, Pat.

Pat, also 18, did not go to college after high school and, from what you know, has done little other than hang out and get drunk at local bars. Pat lives alone.

Twice over the past several months you have read in the local paper about parties at Pat's being busted up by the police. Pat has been accused of serving alcohol to minors and disturbing the peace, and is currently out on bail on a drug charge.

The drinking age in your state is 18.

### College Student

Since going off to college this past fall, you have worked and studied hard to keep up a 3.7 grade point average. Nights and weekends, when your classmates have been partying, you have limited your drinking to a single beer and have generally returned to your dorm room early to get your work done. You have also considered it important to get enough sleep to be alert for your 8 a.m. classes. This is a change from some of the things you did during your high school years.

While you were in high school, you, Pat, and some other friends were caught by the police having a drinking party in the school's football field. Your parents had to come to the police station to bail you out. After that, you moved your parties to the houses of friends whose parents weren't home. Pat was always the one who brought the beer and pot. A couple of times you left your car at the friend's house and walked home because you were too drunk to drive.

You haven't seen your high school friends since you left for college. All of your closest friends will be at tonight's party.

### **Role Play 3—The Last Will and Testament**

#### **Sibling #1**

Your grandmother has asked you to get together with your sibling and come up with an agreed-upon list of what, besides money, you would like her to leave each of you at her death. There aren't a lot of her things about which you have strong feelings, but there are three 18th century oil paintings and your grandfather's pocket watch that you want. At his 75th birthday party, your grandfather told you that these would someday be yours.

#### **Sibling #2**

You have walked through your grandmother's house and have carefully selected the things you would like her to leave you. There are a few pieces of furniture that you don't really care that much about, although they would be useful to furnish your rather sparse living quarters. What you do want, however, are her three 18th century oil paintings and an antique chair. While on his death bed at age 79, your grandfather told you that these would someday be yours.

## **Role Play 4—The Commission**

### **Car Salesperson #1**

You are a salesperson at Sheldon Volkswagen/Audi. This past Saturday, you spent almost two hours with a couple who said they were trying to decide between the Audi A8 and a BMW 740. You took them for a test drive and worked out a price with all the options they wanted. After they left, you located the exact car they were looking for at another dealer and called them with the news. They said they still hadn't made up their minds but would get back to you. This is one commission for which you have really worked.

### **Car Salesperson #2**

Today a couple walked into your dealership and asked for Salesperson #1, who was taking a vacation day. You offered to help them, and they accepted. They told you that they had located a BMW dealer who had offered them a great deal, that they were definitely going to buy a car today, and that it would be the Audi A8 if you could meet their price. Otherwise, they made clear, they would be buying the BMW. After a lengthy negotiation, a number of private conversations with your boss, and decision to substantially cut your own commission, you closed the deal. Your name is on the order form: The commission is yours.

## **Role Play 5—Music, Music, Music**

### **Coworker #1**

You work for a major diamond importer and are often asked to deliver orders to jewelry outlets within a 500 mile district. Today your boss has asked you and a coworker to deliver an order to a city just over four hours away. You have been assigned a company car, and you and your coworker will take turns driving.

You found out in advance that the car is equipped with a brand-new CD player. In anticipation of the long trip, you went out and bought a number of CDs of your favorite music, i.e., Mozart piano concertos, a Rachmaninoff symphony, and a great new recording of the opera *Così fan Tutte*. Rock music makes you itchy and nervous. You have no intention of allowing your coworker to play that junk while you're in the car.

### **Coworker #2**

In anticipation of the long driving trip you're making today, you went out and bought a bunch of CDs of your favorite music, including Lucas Santtana, Toad the Wet Sprocket, and Pearl Jam. You also researched which radio stations along the way play the best pop rock. You like your music wild and loud, and you're looking forward to hearing your new CDs. Classical music gives you nightmares about the piano lessons your parents made you take as a small child. You have no intention of allowing your coworker to play boring classical music while you're in the car.



## A PLACE OF YOUR OWN: A NEGOTIATION ROLE PLAY

### Objectives

- To give participants practice in negotiation skills
- To give participants practice in making their needs and desires understood
- To give participants practice in active listening

### Background

Negotiation is an integral part of daily life. Even simple decisions among coworkers, such as who will go out to get the coffee, or among friends, such as what movie to see, involve negotiation. When emotional needs or interests are minimal on the part of one or more parties to the negotiation, agreement or compromise may be easy and swift. If two friends want to go to the movies and one doesn't care what movie they see, while the other has a very specific preference, the resolution is simple. But if each of the two friends has a different preference, they will have to find a creative solution if they are going to enjoy the night out. The two friends may decide that one friend will pick the movie while the other will pick the restaurant for dinner after the movie.

One principle of negotiation is that by increasing the number of items over which the negotiation is taking place, in this case negotiating over not just the movie but also the restaurant, opportunities are provided for a more satisfactory solution.

The following role play, which involves two parents and a college age son/daughter, will give you an opportunity to practice your negotiation skills in the face of potentially high emotional interests. The roles have been left purposely vague so that you may fill in what you believe your underlying interests would be. If you play one of the parents, you should decide whether what your child is proposing is a good, bad, or neutral idea. In playing these roles, try to consider what your own parents' underlying interests might be if they were in the position described. Be sure you have a clear idea of the assurances you would want from your son/daughter before agreeing to the proposal. Use the questions that appear with the role to guide you to think about and plan what you will say. If you play the college student, project yourself into the role, and use the arguments you would make to your own parents. Here again, it will be necessary to ascertain just what you believe your underlying interests would be and what alternatives exist for meeting those interests. Use the questions that appear with the role to guide you to think about and plan what you will say.

There is also a role for one or more observers. As an observer, your responsibility is to take careful notes, using the observation sheet as a guide, and actively participate in the debriefing that follows the role play.

Before proceeding with the role play, be sure you have read the overview to this section.

### **Instructions**

#### *1. (10 minutes)*

Working in a small group, determine who will play each of the roles—Student, Parent 1, Parent 2, Observer(s).

Read the background information and your role carefully. Determine what your underlying interests are in moving off campus if you are the son or daughter or what your underlying interests are for your son or daughter if you are a parent. As a guide, use the questions that appear with your role. Develop a strategy that will help you achieve your underlying interests. You may read the other roles, although they are not likely to be of much help. If you are an observer, read the questions on the “Observation Sheet” and all roles.

#### *2. (20 minutes)*

Begin the role play by having the student explain his or her interests. One or both of the parents should then respond. Continue until you have reached an agreement or time is up, whichever comes first.

As a parent, you do not have to agree to having your son or daughter live off campus, you need not agree with your spouse, and you may make any demands you wish.

#### *3. (10 minutes)*

Working in the role play groups, the observers should report what they saw and why they believe the negotiation was successful or not. The role players should also report how they felt during the role play and describe the various points they were trying to make, what they saw as their strategies, what they thought they did well, and what they might have done differently.

#### *4. (20 minutes)*

Select a spokesperson from your role play group to report to the class what happened in your role play, the outcome, and whether and why the role play succeeded or failed.

## Role 1: Student

You are currently completing your sophomore year in college. This year and last, you have lived in the dorms. Recently, four of your friends, male and female, suggested that you move off-campus together for your junior and senior years. They have found a great three-bedroom house near fraternity row that is just a short bus ride from campus. In nice weather, you can walk, roller blade, or bike to classes. Your rent at the house will run about 20 percent less than the room-and-meal plan costs in the dorm.

You think it's a great idea, but you're not sure how your parents are going to feel. Since they're going to be paying for most, if not all, of your living expenses, you'll need to get their agreement. You'll be getting together with them to talk it over shortly. Before you get together, answer the questions below.

1. What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks to living off campus? Why?

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2. What do you believe your parents will see as benefits to your living off campus? Why?

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3. What do you believe your parents' objections are likely to be? Why?

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4. What are you willing to do that you think will make your parents more comfortable with your plan?

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## Role 2: Parent 1

Your son or daughter has expressed an interest in living off campus beginning this fall for his or her junior and senior years. You understand that the plan is to live in a three-bedroom house with four friends, male and female, near fraternity row. You have quite a few concerns about such an arrangement, and you're not sure whether this is in his or her best interest. You lived off campus during your senior year in college, so you have some sense of what it's like.

You and your spouse will be getting together with your son or daughter to talk things over shortly. Before you get together, answer the questions below.

1. What are your concerns about your son or daughter living off campus? Why?

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2. What do you see as the benefits of your son or daughter living off campus? For him or her? For you? Why?

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3. What do you want from your son or daughter in return for your consideration of his or her request? (Be specific.)

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4. What assurances from your son or daughter do you want to make you feel comfortable with this plan?

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### Role 3: Parent 2

Your son or daughter has expressed an interest in living off campus beginning this fall for his/her junior and senior years. You understand that the plan is to live in a three-bedroom house with four friends, male and female, near fraternity row. You have quite a few concerns about such an arrangement, and you're not sure whether this is in his or her best interest. You never went to college, so you really don't know much about what it's like to live in a dorm or off-campus with friends.

You and your spouse will be getting together with your son or daughter to talk things over shortly. Before you get together, answer the questions below.

1. What are your concerns about your son or daughter living off campus? Why?

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2. What do you see as the benefits of your son or daughter living off campus? For him or her? For you? Why?

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3. What do you want from your son or daughter in return for your consideration of his or her request? (Be specific.)

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4. What assurances from your son or daughter do you want to help you feel comfortable with this plan?

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### Observer

Before beginning, read each of the roles. Familiarize yourself with the questions below. Take notes during the exercise in response to each of the questions below.

1. In what ways did the role players make clear or fail to make clear their underlying interests?

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2. In what ways did the role players focus on interests rather than demands?

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3. In what ways were the role players able to focus on issues rather than personalities?

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4. In what ways did the role players reflect or fail to reflect a willingness to address one another's needs?

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5. In what ways did the role players show creativity and flexibility in resolving the issues?

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6. What do you think each of the role players could have done differently that might have brought about better results?

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## RABBIT FEVER\*

### Objectives

- To practice the skills of negotiation
- To examine the meaning and purpose of the reservation price
- To examine the meaning and purpose of the no-agreement price
- To practice planning a negotiation strategy

### Instructions

#### *Step 1 (20 minutes)*

Read both the “General Information” and either the buyer’s or seller’s “Confidential Information,” depending on which role you have been assigned. Identify your no-agreement alternative (your best other possibility should you not be able to reach an agreement on this negotiation), and determine both your reservation price (for the buyer—the absolute most you would be willing to pay; for the seller—the absolute least you would be willing to take) and your target price (the amount you would like to spend or realize). Prepare your negotiating strategy which should include, if you are the buyer, your opening counter to the seller’s advertised asking price.

#### *Step 2 (30–40 minutes)*

Meet with the other party in an attempt to negotiate a mutually acceptable price for the used Rabbit convertible described below. By the end of the time period, you should have reached an agreement on a price or concluded that it is not possible for the two of you to agree on a price.

#### *Step 3 (open-ended).*

Participate in class discussion regarding the negotiation. Topics for discussion may include the specifics of any agreement reached; your reservation price and the basis on which it was determined; your negotiating strategy and why it was or wasn’t successful; whether you or the other party departed from the facts contained in the confidential instructions; whether you are happy with the process; and whether you are happy with the substantive outcome of the negotiation.

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### General Information

You and another individual will negotiate concerning the purchase and sale of a used car. The locale is Minneapolis, during the second week of December 1999.

The vehicle in question is a 1991 VW Rabbit convertible with the following features:

- The body is yellow and in excellent condition. The vehicle had been rust-proofed when new. The seller is the original owner, and the car appears to have been well-maintained and garaged overnight.
- The fully-lined, black canvas top is in excellent condition. The boot (a separate lined, black canvas piece used to cover the top when it is down) is missing.
- The interior is clean. The fabric-covered sports seats show only modest wear.
- The odometer reads 53,783 miles.
- Replacement radial tires are in good condition, with about 15,000 miles of wear.
- The AM/FM radio works fine; however, the tape player is not functioning.
- The vehicle has been advertised for sale in the newspaper at \$5,900.

In addition to these general instructions, you will also receive confidential, personal instructions.

You will have fifteen minutes to develop your strategy and tactics. Make some notes below on your ideas and plans about how to bargain:

1. What is your goal? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your reservation price? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What are your opponent's likely goal and reservation price, and how will you attempt to learn more about them? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Strategically, how will you seek to persuade your opponent? \_\_\_\_\_  
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. What will be your tactical moves? \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Negotiator's Worksheet and Checklist

The following worksheet sets out the critical areas for planning for and carrying out a negotiation.

1. Describe your best no-agreement alternative, and set your reservation price.

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2. Describe the actions that you think you can take to improve your no-agreement alternative.

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3. List what you know about your opponent that could possibly be helpful in your negotiation, including possible interests and available alternatives. Describe what you believe his or her negotiating style is like.

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4. List ways and sources for learning more about your opponent.

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5. Briefly describe what you believe your opponent's best no-agreement alternative is. Estimate what you believe his or her reservation price is.

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6. Identify ways in which you can worsen your opponent's no-agreement alternative.

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7. Describe your underlying interests.

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8. Describe what you believe are your opponent's underlying interests.

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9. In integrative bargaining situations, identify areas of potential joint gain. This includes identifying and analyzing the differences between you and your opponent (in relative valuation, forecasts, risk aversion, time preferences, etc.), the possibility that you share certain interests, and the potential for using economies of scale.

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10. Identify ways you believe would make it possible to satisfy the interests of both parties.

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11. Identify the various arguments that you or your opponent might use to support the fairness of your respective bargaining positions. Prepare to use the ones that best support your position. Prepare arguments against those you think your opponent will use.

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12. Use the early stages of the negotiation to learn more about your opponent's interests and style, and to set a favorable tone. The object is to cultivate opportunities for cooperation and creativity, and to reduce the potential for conflict. Focus on a joint effort to find a solution to what is seen as a common problem. Avoid using threats and otherwise personalizing the problem. Make it possible for your opponent to accept your position without loss of face.

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## PART V

### ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES AND CHARACTERISTICS

#### Overview

This section deals with organizational structure—that is, the ways in which organizations set up chains of command; the impact of the external environment on internal operations; the climate of internal operations, generally referred to as the corporate culture; and issues related to managing change.

#### Organizational Structure

Typically, the word *bureaucracy* is used negatively. Aspiring politicians attack “fat-cat bureaucrats” in federal government, many people complain about having to “cut through the bureaucracy” at work, and students often feel frustrated when, because of the bureaucratic structures of their colleges, they are sent from department to department to achieve what should be simple tasks, such as getting a student ID card or a transcript.

A university graduate got a word-processing job at a European company that manufactured large commercial boilers. Besides typing his manager’s correspondence, the grad’s responsibility was to take the huge pile of mail and faxes that arrived each day and stamp each document with the date and a list of twelve sets of officials. His boss would then go through the pile and put checkmarks next to some or all the officials’ names. The people whose names had been checked were to get copies of that piece of correspondence.

From what the grad could tell, the job was taking mounds of paper, making them into bigger mounds of paper, and delivering them so everyone could have a bigger mound of paper. A cynical veteran employee explained the system to him: “When the amount of paperwork is equal to the number of tons of water the boiler can hold, then that job is finished.”

Chances are we have all had negative experiences with large, impersonal bureaucracies; then why are they created? Instead, why don’t companies separate themselves into small independent units in the name of efficiency? Because often, large corporations are more efficient than smaller ones. As frustrating as it is to follow the endless rules and procedures of a formalized, mechanistic bureaucracy, large corporations generally are able to provide goods and services more cheaply than their smaller counterparts.

Unfortunately, the rigidity of bureaucracy may undermine creativity. Over the last decade, for example, we have watched as IBM, once the world leader in computers, become increasingly water-logged by bureaucracy. Innovation, necessary for survival in today’s technologi-



## MAKING THE IDEAL JOB COME TRUE\*

### Background

This exercise has been designed to help you better understand the concepts of career development. The first two parts of the exercise are meant to give you a chance to reflect on your own career aspirations. These can be done either in or before class. The third part of the exercise requires you to role play the part of a human resources manager helping an employee develop a plan for meeting his or her career goals.

### The Task—Part A

Record detailed responses to the following:

1. Identify the ideal job for you when you graduate from college. What would your job title be? What, specifically, will your responsibilities be?
2. Draw a line down the middle of a piece of paper. Title the left column “skills” and the right column “where/how skill was learned.” Use these columns to record your answers to the questions: What specific skills do you have that make you the right person for your ideal job? How did you acquire those skills?

### The Task—Part B

Record detailed responses to the following:

1. Identify the ideal job for you *five years after the job* you wrote about in Part A. What will your job title be? What, specifically, will your responsibilities be?
2. What specific skills and experiences will you have that make you the right person for the job? How do you plan to acquire those skills?
3. What do you think is the responsibility of the company for which you work in helping you acquire those skills and experiences? What can your company do over the first five years of your employment with them to help you prepare for this new position?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages for your company in helping you obtain new skills?

\* Adapted from Wendell French, *Human Resources Management* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1998). This exercise was prepared by Mia Louik, The Rappay Group, 1075 Main Street, Williamstown, MA 01267. Used with permission.

**The Task—Part C**

Working with a partner, do the following:

1. *(20 minutes)*

Have one of you take the role of a manager or human resources professional and the other the role of an employee. Based on the employee's responses to Part B of this exercise, develop a plan to help the employee realize his or her five-year career goal. Create a timeline that depicts the steps the employee will take over the next five years to achieve his or her goals.

2. *(20 minutes)*

Reverse roles, and proceed as in Question C1 above.







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